

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE: PART TWO
Communism and Labor's
Transformation of Nature

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Meat packers in Nebraska step up union organizing

Contracts won at ConAgra; Nebraska Beef vote set for August 16

BY DONALD REED
AND NORM GREGORY

OMAHA, Nebraska—Meat packers here are involved in a number of struggles to win union recognition at the giant packinghouses that are central to the region's economy. Recent contract victories at two ConAgra plants have bolstered the fight by workers at Nebraska Beef, where a union representation vote is scheduled for August 16.

The election will decide whether United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 271 will represent the slaughterhouse's nearly 1,000 production workers, the large majority of whom are immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. There are also significant numbers of African-Americans and workers from the Sudan and countries in Asia at the plant.

UFCW organizers greeted Nebraska Beef workers as they streamed out of the plant August 2 with a leaflet announcing the winning of a first contract at ConAgra's Cudahy plant in South Omaha. The three-year pact, which covers 160 workers newly organized into UFCW Local 271, provides for an immediate wage increase of 45 cents an hour and a total of \$1 an hour over the three years. Over the previous 11 years, workers in the plant had received wage increases totaling only \$1 an hour. Workers will now start at \$11.45 an hour.

For the first time employees will receive prescription, vision, and dental coverage in their medical plan at a greatly reduced cost. In addition, other benefits include a job bid-

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Working people in Argentina resist austerity



Unemployed workers and state employees block bridge on the national highway in Neuquén, in the south of Argentina. Coordinated actions by unionists, unemployed workers, farmers, retirees, and students took place throughout Argentina August 7-8. They protested the move by the De la Rúa government to slash retirement pensions and state employees' wages by 13 percent to continue payments on Argentina's \$130 billion debt. Working people organized highway blockades, strikes, tractorcades, teach-ins, and marches. Some 8,000 workers rallied in Neuquén, joined by flower growers driving 100 tractors. In Salta in the north, workers demanded the release of five *piqueteros* (protesting jobless workers).

Thousands open anti-imperialist youth event in Algeria

BY JACK WILLEY

ALGIERS—The 15th World Festival of Youth and Students opened August 8 at the Capital Olympics Sports Stadium here with some 6,000 delegates from over 100 countries around the world. More delegates are expected to arrive as the Festival proceeds.

The World Youth Festival is an anti-imperialist youth gathering drawing together young workers, farmers, and students involved in movements for national liberation, protests against imperialist-backed austerity drives in semicolonial countries, fights by peasants for land, and other social and political struggles. A large number of participants have come from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, representing the fight for Palestinian self-determination, for the independence of the Western Sahara, and other national liberation struggles.

At the opening ceremony delegates from each country marched into the stadium, many carrying flags and banners. One of the largest delegations hails from Cuba with 750 participants, including 223 youth from 56 countries who are studying in Cuba.

Members of the multinational Cuban delegation
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Peasants, facing drought and famine, demand aid now in Central America

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of peasant families have set up camps in public plazas and parks in several municipalities in Nicaragua, demanding food, government relief, and jobs in face of the effects of a devastating drought spreading across Central America.

To further press their demands, they have threatened to move their camps to the outside of buildings that house presidential, national assembly, and other government offices in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua.

Many of the rural toilers had decided to returned to their homes after an agreement with government agencies to provide them with jobs and food. But with unemployment already high in these cities, the government has only come up with 800 jobs so far.

"Instead of dying here, what we are going to do is ask for aid and start walking to Managua to urge the government to meet our demands," said one of the leaders of the peasant families.

Central America is facing the worst social disaster since the region was hit by hurricane Mitch in 1998, leaving in its wake thousands dead, injured, and missing, along with destruction calculated in the billions of dollars.

According to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), more than 1 million peasants in Central America are threatened with severe hunger. The lack of drought aid from the Nicaraguan or U.S. governments

has so far claimed the lives of at least six people and resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of peasants from the countryside. Crops worth millions of dollars have been destroyed by the drought. The number of people affected is as high as 600,000 in Nicaragua, and more than 100,000 in both Honduras and El Salvador. The UN agency says these numbers are "temporary" because they are expected to rise, and the situation will not improve until the next harvest six months from now.

"If the situation continues, the most vulnerable people could die of hunger in the next weeks," said Giuseppe Lubatti, a representative of the World Food Program (WFP) in Honduras.

The WFP has begun distributing food to the most critically affected regions in Nicaragua and Honduras, and has warned that current supplies are not enough to provide for everyone. "Right now we can only assist a little over half of the vulnerable population."

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Socialist in Massachusetts seeks ballot slot in Congressional race

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—"Our campaign for U.S. Congress urges all working people to back the strike of nurses at Brockton Hospital," said Brock Satter, a meat packer involved in a union organizing drive in nearby Chelsea. "The nurses are standing up to the employers assault on the living conditions of working people and they deserve our support. Like coal miners defending their union and farmers fighting to defend their land, this struggle helps point the way forward for workers and farmers today."

Satter is the Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 9th district in Massa-

chusetts, in a special election called after the death of Joseph Moakley, a Democrat.

Speaking to campaign supporters at the start of a petitioning drive here to place Satter on the ballot, the socialist candidate said his campaign points to the need for workers and farmers in the United States to join together in a revolutionary struggle for a government of their own. "Only by replacing the capitalist government of the superwealthy ruling class, and fighting to overturn capitalism itself, can we begin to truly collaborate with working people around the world and build a society fit for

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Preparing war, Israel demonizes Palestinians

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Preparing for the possibility of an all-out war by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people, a number of commentators and politicians in both Israel and the United States have sharpened their rhetorical offensive against the besieged people. In feature editorials or news articles, the *Wall Street Journal*, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, and *U.S. News and World Report* editor-in-chief Mortimer Zuckerman have all tried to shift the blame for the conflict onto the Palestinians and demonize them in world public opinion.

In an August 2 editorial the *Wall Street Journal* said there is "a right and wrong with this struggle, which at bottom is an attack on the West and the idea of democracy. Hard as it is to accept, the differences with the Palestinian regime...may just not be bridgeable." The paper urged the Bush administration to shift gears, recognize the interests of the Israeli rulers and the Palestinian people as irreconcilable, and declare itself unambiguously in favor of Tel Aviv's bellicose course.

Arguing against Washington's ongoing attempts to restart negotiations, it said in support of Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon that he "comprehended from the first that the danger was not that the situation would degenerate into war [but that] Israel

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Canada court ruling shines spotlight on gov't abuse of Natives

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—A recent court decision has shifted the blame but not settled the issue of who is responsible for the systematic abuse suffered by tens of thousands of Native children in the Canadian government's residential school system, which existed for nearly a century.

Donald Brenner, chief justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, issued a ruling in early July directing the Canadian government to pay 75 percent of the damages awarded to six Native plaintiffs who were sexually abused as children at the Alberni Indian Residential School on Vancouver Island. The other 25 percent will be borne by the United Church of Canada, which operated the school as Ottawa's agent. The awards in this case ranged from \$10,000 to \$145,000.

During the 1990s, nearly 8,000 former students at the Native residential schools filed lawsuits, charging sexual and physical abuse, physical deprivation, and loss of culture. Exposing how the Canadian government used every means possible to obliterate Native culture and force Natives to become a low-wage, super-exploited sector of the working class has been one of the major Native rights fights in Canada over the past decade.

Ottawa built and owned the residential schools and asked the churches—Catholic, Anglican, United, and Presbyterian—to operate them until it took back their operation in 1969. The last of the schools were only phased out in the 1980s. The lawsuits name both the federal government and the churches as defendants. Estimates of the final tab in the resolution of the claims, either through negotiation or court decisions, have run as high as Can\$2 billion (Can\$1 = US 65 cents).

In his decision, the judge said that Ottawa hired the school principal, controlled its finances, set the teachers' wages, selected the students, "and continued to be responsible for their well-being...that responsibility was non-delegable."

This court decision is the second on the issue as Ottawa has pursued a delaying strategy of fighting against assuming responsibility for the widespread abuses. In an earlier British Columbia court case, the judge ruled that the Anglican Church, one of the defendants in that case, must pay 60 percent of the judgment and the government 40 percent. The government has tried to deflect the blame and liability for damages onto the churches.

In 1998, Ottawa launched the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program with 12 ADR pilot projects, supposedly to see if settlements could be reached more quickly and with fewer legal costs through negotiations. Of the 12 projects over three years, only one has produced a token result—nine cases out of 100 claims settled at one Arctic school. Meanwhile, the government has spent millions in legal fees and administrative costs and continues to insist that the churches absorb 50 percent of responsibility and liability.

A group of Anglican churches in the Diocese of Cariboo in British Columbia plans to declare bankruptcy October 15 as a result of the legal claims. Canada's three largest Christian churches—United, Roman Catholic, and Anglican—say the legal actions are pushing them towards bankruptcy. The United Church paid \$2.3 million in court and lawyers costs last year.

Government responsibility

The entire program was initiated, funded, and governed by Ottawa. In 1892, the Canadian government passed an order-in-council regulating the operation of Indian residential schools, some of which had been in operation since the mid-1800s. It set up the partnership to hand operation over to the churches.

The aim was forcible assimilation by removing children from the influence, culture, and language, not to speak of love and care, of their parents and elders. There were more than 130 schools, and some 105,000 children spent their early years in them.



Militant/Dennis King

Natives with the Lil'wat Peoples Movement blockade road north of Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1990. For decades thousands of Native children have suffered from system abuse and harassment in residential school system run by Canadian government.

Children were often abducted to attend the schools. Bill Morris recalls the day in 1955 when he was removed from his home at Bearskin Lake in northern Ontario. He heard what sounded like a huge bumblebee. When it stopped, he saw a crowd at the docks. "I was a nosy kid so I headed through the crowd. The next thing I know someone grabbed me and threw me into this plane. There were about 12 of us in there."

The students were often beaten if they tried to speak their own language. They were easy prey for sexual abusers and brutal teachers. Malnutrition and disease were common in the schools. Documents in the National Archives in Ottawa reveal that Ottawa denied basic dental care and Vitamin C to some Native children in controlled experiments in the 1940s and early '50s. Unpasteurized milk was sometimes used even though use of pasteurized milk was mandatory in institutions at the time, and tuberculosis was not uncommon.

A 1952 federal government survey found that "ten people employed as teachers claimed no formal education beyond Grade 8." A 1948 Department of Indian Affairs study on the qualifications of teachers in the schools showed that 40 percent had no professional training.

Ben Pratt, who attended a residential school in Saskatchewan, was being interviewed by David Napier, a reporter for the *Anglican Journal*, who was working on an in-depth article. Pratt, who was sexually abused by a now-convicted worker at the school, told him, "If the federal government was an individual and you were that person, I'd kill you. Honest to God I would." Later, he said the teachers didn't even call the students by their names. "I wasn't called Ben or even Pratt. I was '38.'"

The consequences of these experiences and the systematic racist discrimination by capitalist employers is shown in the low

social, educational, and employment conditions among Canada's Native population. Native people have the highest suicide rate of any demographic group in Canada. Young Natives are eight times more likely to kill themselves than non-Natives. Alcoholism and alienation are rife.

While seven in 10 adult Natives are either working or looking for work, the figure is less than 50 percent on the reserves. Those Natives who had jobs in 1990 earned 30 percent less than the average wages in Canada.

The forcible disintegration of Native culture and communities through the residential schools, the breaking of bonds and cultural continuity among the different Native generations, the pitiful education supplied, and the sexual and physical abuse in the schools, are in a large way responsible for these conditions.

But Canada's capitalist rulers did not anticipate these Native children would grow up and fight back.

U.S.-EU banana war deal faces hurdles

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

An accord to patch up a long-standing trade dispute between the U.S. imperialists and their rivals in Europe over banana import rules threatened to unravel because the big powers failed to ask countries in Central America if they approved the pact. The governments of Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua refused go along with implementing the trade deal saying they lacked all the information on the new rules that they needed. Under the agreement Washington lifted sanctions worth \$191 million on exports from EU countries while the EU agreed to amend its banana trade rule by Jan. 1, 2002. If the EU fails to meet the deadline, Washington could reimpose sanctions.

THE MILITANT

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Immigrants demand right to drivers licenses

BY NELL WHEELER
AND BILL KALMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Marches of immigrant workers and their supporters demanding the right to a drivers license have been rolling throughout central California this summer. Hundreds have demonstrated in San Jose, San Rafael, Salinas, Antioch, Oakland, and Redwood City, linking the fight for a license with the fight for legal residence and against police brutality.

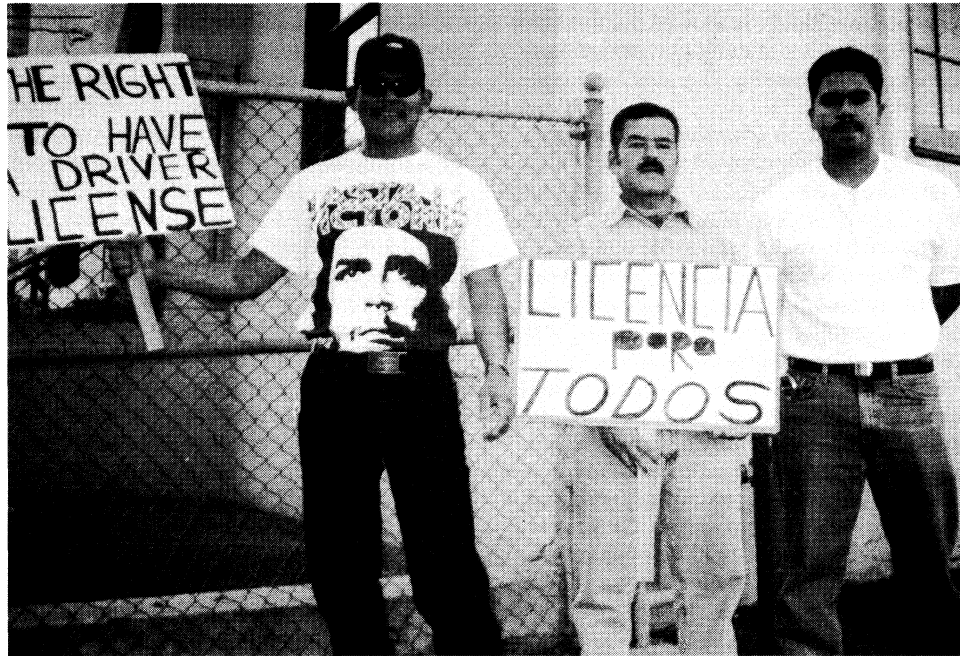
Last October the California Department of Motor Vehicles began to check the Social Security numbers of everyone applying for a license, a move that has implications for tens of thousands of workers beyond denying them the right to legally drive a car. Some 29 states now require a Social Security number when getting or renewing a drivers license, a backdoor attempt by the U.S. ruling class to establish a national identification card.

Miguel Moscote, a recent immigrant from Mexico, participated in a protest of some 200 people, mainly Mexican, in San Jose July 28. "They say this is the most democratic country in the world," Moscote said, "but they oppress people all over the globe, and even inside their own borders. This march shows that some of us just won't conform to their kind of politics."

Manuel Nava, at age 71, said he is demanding justice for agricultural workers hired under the *bracero* program, a guest-worker scheme of the U.S. government and the employers from 1942 to 1964. Nava, who worked for eight years under the program, and other workers are fighting to receive money the employers withheld from their paychecks during that period. They were told the funds would be given to them on their return to Mexico. "It's probably in some bank in Mexico," he said, "they just won't tell us where. License, legalization, justice for the *braceros*, and stop police harassment. That's why I'm here," he said. This was his first political demonstration.

María Marroquin organized a half-dozen Mexican day laborers from Los Altos to attend the demonstration in San Jose. "There is a principle here," she said. "We all need to march in support of this principle!" Echoing this sentiment, Sabino Torres, a self-employed tree-trimmer, carried a sign that read, "No taxes without license." "We must work, and there is no public transportation here," he said.

Armando Cruz, an activist with Centro Azteca de Información (Aztec Information Center), the main group organizing the marches, spoke from the platform. "They take tax money from our paychecks and use it to build highways and bridges so that everyone can use them. If we help pay for these, then we have a right to use them," Cruz told the crowd.



Militant/Bill Kalman

Protesters rally in San Jose July 28, one of many actions to defend immigrant rights.

These boisterous marches usually wind their way for several miles through working class neighborhoods and downtown areas, attracting many immigrants from Mexico. Along the way marchers shout

"¿Qué queremos? ¡La licencia! ¿Qué perdemos? ¡La paciencia!" (What do we want? A license! What are we losing? Our patience!), and "What do we want? License! When do we want it? Now!" Marches often

After demands by immigrants, Bush considers broadening legalization moves

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Bush administration's moves to open up the residency process for up to 3 million undocumented workers from Mexico have encouraged many immigrants to press their demands for full legal rights.

In the face of widespread demands by immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America for the measure to be extended to other nationalities, Bush said that although "the Mexican issue is at the forefront," he is "open-minded," and will "listen to all proposals people have in mind."

"Nothing's been ruled in and nothing's been ruled out," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan. "White House aides [have been] startled by the intensity of the reaction to the details of the proposal," reported the *New York Times*, adding that "news of the plan has galvanized immigrant organizations across the country."

By official government estimates up to 7 million people are now in the United States without papers, compared with 5 million in October 1996. That year, more than two-and-

a-half million were from Mexico, around 90,000 or more were from a number of Latin American countries and the Philippines, and tens of thousands were from countries in the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe. Some 720,000 hailed from other countries.

"We realize this doesn't just affect Latinos, but also Asians, Africans, and Middle Eastern communities, regardless of where they come from," said Angelica Salas of the Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights of Los Angeles.

Hanu Komaragiri, a 31-year-old software designer from India, told reporters in New York that "if this can be done for Mexicans, it can be done for others, too." Bassam Al-Bizri, 37, an engineer from Lebanon, said, "In the global economy, this is just a small fix. The real fix is open borders."

Organizations representing immigrants from Asian and Central American countries are among those planning marches on the capital later this year to demand amnesty.

Under the draft plan, released in late July by a joint U.S.-Mexican government task

double in size along the route.

At a demonstration July 22 in Antioch, Fidencio Vazquez, a welder, explained that having a license "gives you a little more security from the police. I have my license," he said, "but I march for all those who do not." His son, a student at Richmond High School who also attended the march, helped organize a protest at his school two years ago to force the school board to sponsor a program about Mexican-Americans on Diversity Day. The school is 50 percent Spanish-speaking.

Hector Acosta and Armando Cardona are members of Ironworkers Local 790. "We can't forget where we came from," Acosta said. "Driving in this country is a necessity." Cardona chimed in, "I support the rights of the undocumented. You need a drivers license to support your family, papers or not." Elias Silva, a member of Mail Handlers Local 302, was attending his first march. "Unions have to protect all workers," he said. "We all use the same hands when we work, we all need the same union protection."

The next marches are planned for early August in San Rafael and Salinas. For more information, call Centro Azteca in San Jose at (408) 929-9551 or 203-1696. A demonstration for legalization of all immigrants backed by a number of unions and other organizations and will take place in San Jose August 25.

force headed by U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell and Attorney General John Ashcroft, people from Mexico without papers—numbering at least 3 million—will be able to apply for residency. Bush has said he aims to present a final version at a September meeting with Mexican president Vicente Fox.

"Any legalization plan would be part of an expanded guest-worker program to meet labor shortages claimed by employers like farmers and restaurant owners," according to the *New York Times*. "We ought to make it easier for people who want to employ somebody, who are looking for workers, to be able to hire people who want to work," said the U.S. president July 27.

Reportedly, the task force has stricken the word amnesty from its vocabulary and replaced it with "regularization," "earned adjustment," and similar terms. "I oppose blanket amnesty. The American people need to know that," said Bush.

Fox called for approval of the plan in a July 28 radio broadcast in Mexico City. "I hope that with the backing of President Bush and the good will of the Senate and the American Congress," he said, "we can soon accomplish this for 3 million or 4 million Mexicans that are there." CNN reported that Fox called for the eventual legalization of "all Mexicans living secret lives in the United States."

"It isn't fair to consider [Mexican workers] illegal when they are employed, when they are working productively, when they are generating so much for the American economy," he said. "They shouldn't have to walk around like criminals or stay hidden."

Bush's moves on legalization of immigrants was condemned at the national convention of the Reform Party. "We need the United States of America Americanized," said party leader and ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan. The convention adopted a platform supporting a 10-year ban on immigration, refusing citizenship to children born on U.S. soil to noncitizens, and using the Army and National Guard to set up patrols at U.S. borders. Buchanan has campaigned on these reactionary themes in three campaigns for U.S. president.

Meanwhile, Ashcroft "reluctantly" ordered the implementation of a Supreme Court decision of several weeks earlier, reported the July 20 *Washington Post*. The court had ruled against the indefinite detention of some 3,400 immigrants who have been convicted by the courts in this country and have served their sentences, but whose home-country governments do not accept their return. In a 5-4 decision the judges set a limit of six months on such detention. The ruling struck a blow at a key provision of a reactionary immigration law passed in 1996 under then-President William Clinton.

Washington balks at UN meeting on racism

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Washington is threatening to boycott a United Nations-sponsored international conference on racism, slated to take place in Durban, South Africa, if the treatment of the Palestinian people by the government of Israel and a proposal for reparations for slavery and colonialism are even placed on the agenda for discussion.

The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will involve delegations from governments, inter-governmental organizations, and other groups approved by the UN's Economic and Social Council. A nongovernmental organization (NGO) forum and Youth Summit will coincide with the August 31-September 7 gathering.

The U.S. government boycotted two previous UN conferences on racism, held in 1979 and 1983, over the fact that discussion on Israel was on the agenda. The final declarations issued at those two conferences included points condemning Tel Aviv's racism toward the Palestinian people and the Israeli government's well-publicized links to the apartheid regime then in place in South Africa.

The imperialist powers organized in the European Union (EU) have joined Washington in demanding that any reference to Zionism be taken off the agenda of the Durban conference. Several governments in the Mideast and other predominately Arab countries insist that the debate be included.

The EU governments are also in agreement with the U.S. rulers in opposing any discussion of reparations for centuries of slavery and colonialism, claiming this is just dredging up the past. British officials took the occasion of a visit in June by South African president Thabo Mbeki to warn that African governments should not use the conference to press for any financial compensation. "The African group [at the UN] has put forward a position which makes extensive reference to the historical slave trade," said a spokesperson for the British foreign office, according to the *Independent Online*, published in South Africa. "But no one wants a retrospective conference.... We are looking to address contemporary issues."

An early draft of the proposed themes to discuss at the conference listed, "Provision of effective remedies, recourse, redress, [compensatory]* and other measures at the national, regional and international levels." A footnote explained that the word "compensatory" was in brackets at the insistence of the Group of Western European and Other States, indicating further discussion was requested. The Israeli government backed this position. The Group of African States and the governments of Cuba and Syria were noted as supporting the inclusion of language on compensation.

Coverage in the U.S. big-business press on the question of compensation has stressed worries that a declaration from the UN conference will encourage African-

Americans to demand reparations for chattel slavery in the Americas. While this is one reason for Washington's position, the imperialists' worries in America and Europe are broader. Most semicolonial countries have supported the discussion, not simply to review past abuses but as a way of addressing devastating conditions that are a product of imperialist domination today. In early July Abdul Minty, South Africa's deputy director-general of foreign affairs, suggested that compensation could include measures "such as debt relief, development, and support for fighting AIDS."

In response to the U.S. government's boycott threat, Mary Robinson, the UN high commissioner on human rights, called on the Arab countries to back down, accusing those who wanted discussion of the Palestinian question of "putting the Durban conference at risk." UN secretary general Kofi Annan also gave tacit support to the Bush administration's demands, speaking before a conference of the National Urban League in Washington July 30. "If this conference [on racism] is to succeed, there is an acute need for common ground," he said.

Responding to the controversy, South African foreign affairs director-general Siphos Pityana said, "It is not for us as South Africa to persuade anyone to come." What delegation if any to send is a decision for each government, he said. "If they don't come, people will presumably read into it that they don't see the issues as important."

Report: schools becoming more segregated

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Progress toward equal education opportunity for students who are Black or Latino has been pushed back during the past decade, said a recent Harvard University study. The document reviews the erosion of school desegregation efforts that grew out of civil rights battles of the 1950s and '60s. The attack on school desegregation has been part of the capitalist rulers' bipartisan offensive to roll back other social gains won by working people, including affirmative action and bilingual education.

The report, titled "Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation," notes that the trend in reversing desegregation gains is undermining educational opportunities for Black and Latino children. It found that in 1998-99 around 70 percent of Black children—up from 63 percent in 1981—attended schools where the minority population is more than 50 percent. At least 76 percent of Latino youth went to segregated schools that year.

Prior to the 1960s, public schools throughout the United States for Blacks and other oppressed nationalities were segregated, with grossly inferior conditions. This inequality also existed in jobs, housing, and every other facet of society. Under pressure of the battle that was beginning in the 1950s against the Jim Crow system of legal segregation across the South, and the rising anti-colonial struggle around the world, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the 1954 *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that supposedly "separate but equal" schools were unconstitutional.

As a result of the victories of the civil rights movement in the South, that region of the country experienced the greatest increase in desegregation between 1964-70. In fact it remains the only region in the country where whites typically attend schools with significant numbers of Blacks, according to the Harvard University report. Also, "the period of growing desegregation coincided with the period of the most dramatic narrowing of the test score gap ever recorded" for Black and white students, it noted. Black students gaining access to better facilities, including new textbooks, better desks, and well-constructed buildings can account for some of the improvement in academic performance.

Acceleration of segregation

In the decade between 1988 and 1998, however, erosion of desegregation plans accelerated throughout the United States. The segregation of housing in metropolitan areas, poorly implemented desegregation plans, and the Supreme Court's blocking of cross-district desegregation contributed to the rise in resegregation of public schools. Some of the largest school districts—including New York, Atlanta, Baltimore, and Chicago—never had significant desegregation programs.

Schools in the state of New York, followed by those in Michigan, Illinois, and California, were found to be the most segregated in the country. In Minnesota, more than 60 percent of the state's Black students attend schools where minorities make up most of the students.

While desegregation programs still exist in many cities, court orders have terminated desegregation plans in recent years in St. Petersburg, Florida; Rockford, Illinois; Nashville, Tennessee; Wilmington, Delaware; Denver; Cleveland; and elsewhere.

The authors of the Harvard report didn't have to look far to find one of the most segregated school systems in the country. In Boston, where mass struggles for desegregation took place in 1974-75, court-ordered busing ended in 1987. By 1975 the city's public school system had 85,000 students, of whom 49 percent were white, 39 percent Black, 9 percent Latino, and 3 percent Asian. Today some 63,000 of Boston's 83,000 school-age children attend Boston's public schools, where 49 percent are Black, 26 percent Latino, 9 percent Asian, and 15 percent white, due to the fact that many children who are white are sent to private or suburban schools.

One of the Supreme Court rulings that helped step up ruling-class moves to dismantle school desegregation plans came with the 1991 *Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell*. That decision said school districts could be released from court-ordered busing if a local federal district court judged they had sufficiently implemented

their court mandates. It allowed them to start assigning students to neighborhood schools that were segregated as the result of segregated housing.

For example, in Charlotte, North Carolina, the site of the country's first busing order, schools have become more segregated since the 1990s. New schools with modern equipment have been built in the outer edges of the Mecklenburg County suburbs, while schools in the more working-class areas of central Charlotte, where many Black residents live, are falling apart.

In September 1999 federal district judge Robert Potter declared the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools fully desegregated and ordered the school board to end any consideration of race in school assignments. Black parents and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board appealed this decision, and the following year a federal appeals court overturned Potter's ruling.

Surge of immigrants in public schools

Over the last three decades, the number

of Latino and Black students in U.S. public schools increased by 5.8 million, while white students' attendance declined by 5.6 million. As a result of massive immigration into the United States from Latin America, the Latino student population exploded from 2 million in 1968 to 6.9 million in 1998—an increase of 245 percent in 30 years.

In 1968 there were three times as many Blacks as Latinos attending public schools, but by 1998 there were seven Latino students for every eight Blacks. The 1968 ratio of 17 white students for every Latino student was reduced to four whites for every Latino student 30 years later. Between 1970 and 1998 Latino enrollments more than tripled in California, and rose by 508 percent in Florida. Other states that experienced dramatic increases over that period included Texas, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, and New Mexico.

"Though our schools will be our first major institutions to experience nonwhite majorities, our research consistently shows that schools are becoming increasingly segregated

and are offering students vastly unequal educational opportunities," remarked Gary Orfield, co-director of Harvard's Civil Rights Project and one of the study's authors.

With the increase in Latino student enrollment also came segregation by language. Many immigrants in the United States have incomes below the official poverty line; their children attend schools with inadequate facilities and have the highest dropout rates. Schools in California, Florida, and Texas—states with large concentrations of immigrants where affirmative action for college admission has been banned—have "a poor records of graduating students" from immigrant families, stated the Harvard study.

According to the report, "the only state where there was substantial desegregation of Latino students was Colorado, the site of the 1973 Supreme Court decision recognizing Latino desegregation rights." That court ruling was a result of pressure exerted by the mass protests against discrimination by the Chicano people in the southwestern states.

Massachusetts striking nurses stay strong

BY SARAH ULLMAN

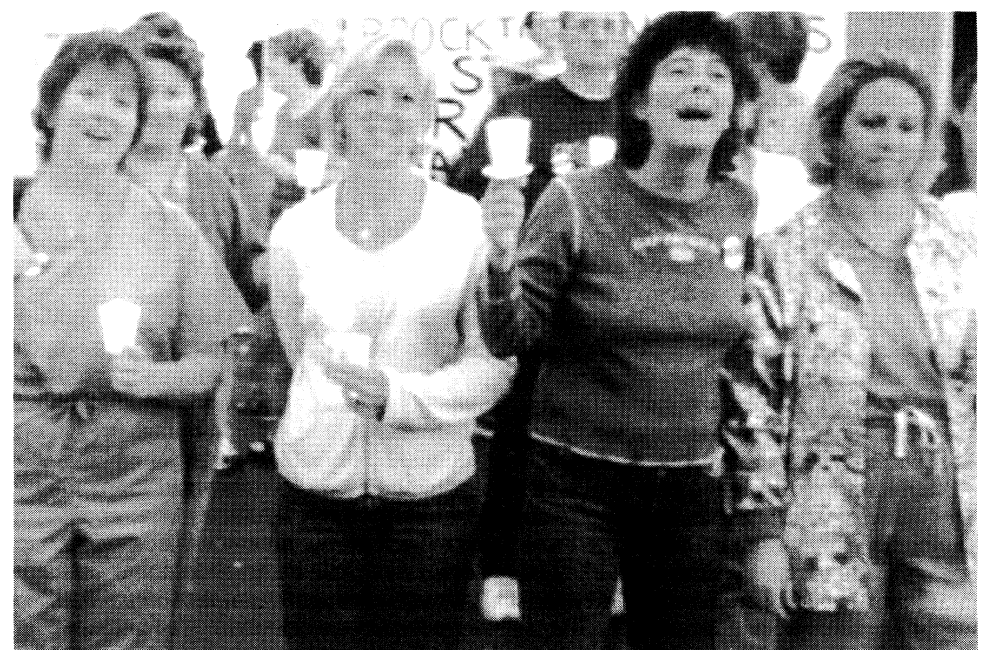
BROCKTON, Massachusetts—"I think it's about time that changes are made for all the nurses: we just happen to be the ones negotiating a contract," said Colleen Munroe, a labor and delivery nurse on strike against Brockton Hospital. "It's our time to say 'Enough is enough.' Nurses are caring, giving people. Administrations everywhere have just been taking advantage of that."

That determination was shared by the several hundred strikers and their supporters who turned out for a candlelight march and vigil July 17. It was one of the largest of a series of strike solidarity actions held by the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA), their union.

As the strike enters its third month, no progress in reaching a settlement was reported after a July 26 bargaining session. Elaine Thibault, a short-stay surgical nurse with 30 years experience, said, "Things are going nowhere at the negotiating table. We are seeking clear language on staffing and overtime."

These are the central issues in dispute: a contractual commitment to adequate staffing to prevent the need for forced overtime, and the right to refuse overtime whenever a nurse feels too tired or ill to deliver safe care. They are also seeking double the paltry 3 percent annual raise offered by management.

The striking nurses see themselves as standing up not only for themselves but at the same time for patients and better health care. As Barbara Milligan, a medical/surgical nurse with 27 years at Brockton Hospital, explained, "I need to do this to provide better working conditions and respect for nursing. In the last 15 years there's been a decline in respect. It's all about money: giving the cheapest cost, basic health care—get them in, get them out. HMOs have overtaken medicine at the expense of the patients, who are put at risk when health care workers are tired and overwhelmed."



Militant/Sarah Ullman

Several hundred strikers and their supporters turn out for a candlelight march and vigil July 17. A settlement has not been reached three months into the strike.

"Morale is high," Thibault reported, adding that "no one has crossed the picket line. Unemployment benefits have made things easier. But there has to be movement. The hospital could be destroyed by all the money he [CEO Norman Goodman] is paying to continue the strike breaking."

Scabs were flown in by U.S. Nursing Corp., which provides nurses to cross picket lines nationwide, including during last year's seven-week strike won by the MNA against St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester.

A pay stub for one of the strikebreakers fell into strikers' hands—reportedly left on a hospital copy machine—showing \$4,500 for an 84-hour workweek.

The picket line is a din of honking from passing motorists giving support, and a wide range of unionists and others come out to the picket lines. Of the 455 MNA

members in the bargaining unit, 94 percent went on strike May 25. Not one of these nurses has broken ranks.

Striker Lynn McMahon commented, "We are united, but the hospital administration does not seem to be affected by anything. He [Goodman] called elderly supporters of the strike who came to our picket line 'outside agitators.' The police said the elderly sitting in chairs at the picket line had to stand up."

Another supporter is Alicia Rose, a teacher who has visited the lines many times. She said, "The strike has opened my eyes to what unions are for. Through all of this I have come to know what unions are all about. I work at a private school and we are discussing the need to organize there."

Sarah Ullman is a garment worker in the Boston area. Brock Satter, a meat packer, contributed to this article.

Pentagon sets plans to shoot down satellites

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Gen. Michael Ryan, the Air Force chief of staff, stated August 1 that Washington must develop the technology to shoot down other countries' satellites and other orbiting spacecraft.

"Eventually we're going to have to have the capability to take things out in orbit," stated Ryan. He called for developing anti-satellite weapons, which the Pentagon has been working on for years but has not deployed.

Ryan pointed to the expanding commerce being conducted by U.S. companies in space as well as the Pentagon's increased dependence on space satellites for carrying out many of its land-based operations, providing Washington with an economic and military advantage over other nations.

"We have to in some way be able to protect those assets," Ryan stated. "And that leads you to the thought that if you're going to be up there trying to protect them

defensively, where do you cross the line into offensive operations?"

The Air Force general added, "Historically, wherever commerce has gone and our national interests have gone, so have gone our force. On land, sea, in the air, we tended to exploit the realm we were dependent upon. I would suggest that some time in the future here we're going to have to come to a policy decision on whether we're going to use space for both defensive and offensive capabilities."

Washington currently has about 100 military satellites orbiting the earth along with another 150 U.S.-based commercial satellites.

Prior to assuming the post of U.S. defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld headed up a commission on space that concluded that Washington must move forward with the weaponization of space. It called for Washington to develop anti-satellite weapons as well as a doctrine for space

combat.

According to a *Washington Post* article, "The United States has already experimented with anti-satellite weapons, including a giant chemical laser fired in 1997 from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico that successfully disabled sensors on its target, an aging U.S. military satellite."

During NATO's bombing attacks against Serbia in 1999, the U.S. Air Force came "very close" to employing space-based offensive capabilities, wrote Barry Watts, the director of program analysis and evaluation in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in a report in February. During the course of this assault, B-2 bombers launched Joint Direct Attack Munitions, guided by signals from global positioning satellites.

The success of the B-2 "unquestionably reinforces the view that the United States is far ahead of other nations in its ability to enhance terrestrial military operations with space systems," Watts wrote.

Preparing war, Israeli rulers demonize Palestinian people

Continued from front page

was *already in a war*...a continuation...of the war of independence from 1948, when the Arabs rejected the United Nations compromise and attacked the fledgling Jewish state."

In an interview featured in the *New York Times*, former Labor Party leader Barak focused his attack on Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority, as a foil for how he thinks the Palestinian people as a whole should be treated. "I think [Arafat] should feel a cold shoulder from the world," he said, characterizing him as a "thug" who "runs a terrorist enterprise."

The paper reported that Barak supports Sharon "when he sends the Israeli army to kill accused masterminds of terrorism, while stopping short of threatening all-out war against the Palestinian Authority." The *Times*

added that "such calculated killings...were also carried out under Mr. Barak."

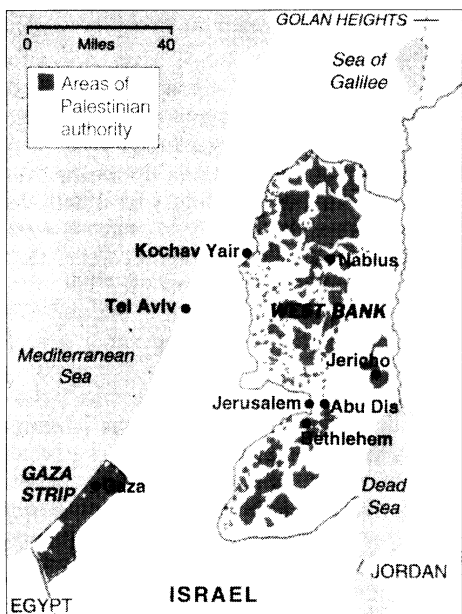
"It was time for Israel and other countries to get tougher with Mr. Arafat by 'isolating' him, much as they do figures like [Iraqi president] Saddam Hussein and [Libyan president] Muammar el-Qaddafi," the *Times* said of Barak's views. Israel should unilaterally redraw its borders to cut the Palestinians off completely, Barak said, a move that "would involve creating a security zone along the Jordan River and forming large settlement blocs to include 80 percent of the Israelis living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

Claims Palestinian leader an 'obstacle'

Mortimer Zuckerman presented his views in a New York *Daily News* column titled, "Arafat is the obstacle to peace in Mideast," complete with a racist caricature cartoon of Arafat. Responding to statements by Palestinian leaders on why negotiations with Israel have failed, Zuckerman stated that the Palestinian leader "seeks to rewrite history through a propaganda campaign."

Arafat and Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Korei had told the press that aside from a patchwork of territorial "concessions" offered by Tel Aviv in the negotiations, the Israeli government demanded control over military affairs, the water aquifer, and other key resources and powers as part of a settlement. Arafat said the two parties never even got to the issue of allowing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes in successive assaults by the Israeli regime to return. In response to their demand for a contiguous state, the Palestinians were offered a group of "cantons," the Palestinian officials said.

In 1967 Israel launched a surprise invasion of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, and, in a six-day war, seized the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan



Map shows scattered areas under nominal Palestinian control. Israel seized West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 war.



Israeli tank outside Jerusalem. Pro-Israel commentators have sharpened jingoistic rhetoric, stressing "unbridgeable" differences between Tel Aviv and Palestinians.

Heights from Syria. Unlike their seizure of land in 1948, which was marked by massacres and other actions to drive Palestinians out of the country, the Israeli imperialists sought to capture the Palestinian populations of these regions and to superexploit this large pool of labor power. Today the Palestinian Authority has nominal control over the Gaza Strip and hundreds of spots in the West Bank—areas the Israeli government says it can invade at any time for "security reasons."

Dubbing Arafat a "liar" who talks "glibly in English about his readiness to make peace, then ominously in Arabic about erasing Israel from the map," Zuckerman opposed conceding to Palestinian demands for the resumption of talks or the assignment of an international observer force to the Middle East. He supported Tel Aviv's assassinations policy, writing that "preemptive action, based on intelligence, is the only way to minimize the dangers terrorism poses to a civil society.... No American leader could survive if he failed to take preemptive action against terrorist groups."

Unbridgeable differences

Washington and other major imperialist powers represented in the European Union

continue to call for a restart to negotiations, and frequently differ with their allies in Tel Aviv over how to deal with the Palestinian struggle.

After a strike July 31 by Israeli helicopter gunships in the West Bank City of Nablus, which took the lives of two leaders of Hamas and six other people, the president of the European Union issued a statement in "rejection of targeted assassinations of Palestinian militants by Israel." He also exhorted "the Palestinian Authority to intensify with unfailing determination its efforts against extremist violence and terrorism."

U.S. vice president Richard Cheney expressed mild tactical disagreement with the Israeli action, saying that "there's some justification in [Israel's] trying to protect themselves by preempting. Clearly, it would be better if they could work with the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority and the terrorists of whatever stripe could be headed off and imprisoned and tried, rather than having them actually assassinated."

State Department spokesperson Charles Hunter used stronger language, saying, "The [Israeli] attack represents an escalation, is highly provocative, and makes efforts to restore calm much more difficult."

The assault sparked a mass outpouring the next day in the West Bank city of Nablus, home to more than 150,000 people. Tens of thousands of people packed the central square. Participants accompanied the victims' coffins, carried Palestinian flags and posters, and perched on rooftops to hear speakers who included the city governor and a representative of the Fatah organization. All the major Palestinian organizations were represented in the action.

Closer to 'total confrontation'

The attack took Israel a "step closer towards total confrontation with the Palestinians," reported the August 2 *Financial Times*. In late July several major media outlets had reported draft Israeli plans for an all-out military assault—a strategy that is the subject of widespread debate in Israel's ruling circles.

"Israel's action appeared to mark a turning point in the 10-month-old Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation," continued the report. Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, it stated, had de-emphasized international diplomacy, "mov[ing] on from attempts to win international support and pin blame for the collapse of the cease-fire, brokered by the U.S. in June, on Yassir Arafat."

Sharon has been criticized inside his cabinet and within the Likud party as he has resisted calls for the immediate launch of a full-scale military offensive. According to the *Times*, one recent Likud rally degenerated into a shouting match as Sharon defended "his relative restraint against those urging preemptive invasive action into Palestinian-controlled areas." Likud parliamentarian Yuval Steinitz stated that the Israeli military should "go in to destroy Palestinian infrastructure and destroy illegal mortars and weapons...not a permanent hold but a preemptive strike to prevent a greater war later on."

Justice Minister Meir Sheetrit is one cabinet minister who supports Sharon's present course. "All-out war against the Palestinian Authority would be a terrible mistake. We have to do everything possible to put a stop to terrorism without setting off a real war," he said on August 4.

Pathfinder welcomed at 'Lumumba' in Chicago

BY CLAUDIA HOMMEL

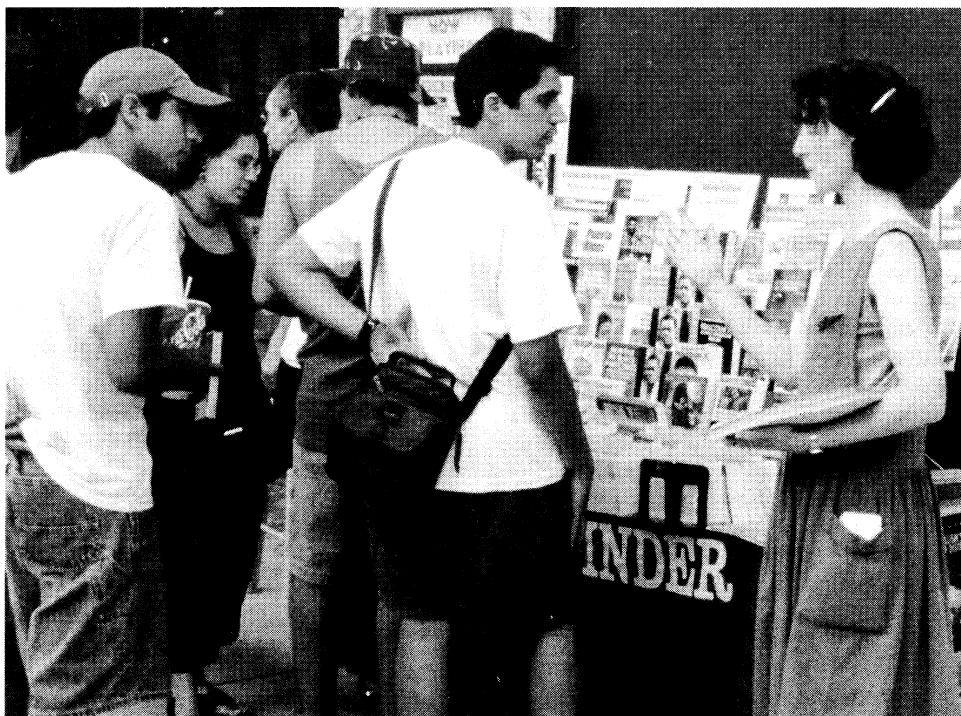
CHICAGO—After receiving rave reviews from Chicago's major daily and weekly papers and a high recommendation on National Public Radio, hundreds of people lined up outside the northside art-film house to see *Lumumba*. The movie depicts the anticolonial struggle in the Congo that led to the country gaining independence from Belgium in June 1960, and the overthrow of the new nation's first government headed by Patrice Lumumba, who was assassinated with support from the U.S. and Belgian rulers.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists set up a literature table to meet workers and others interested in how the lessons of the revolution in the Congo apply to the struggles of working people in the United States today.

Dozens of moviegoers stopped by the sidewalk table featuring Pathfinder's newly reissued pamphlet *Revolution in the Congo* and a wide range of titles on socialism, anti-imperialist struggles, the Cuban Revolution, and revolutionary politics, as well as the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. In one week of showings, 138 copies of the new pamphlet were purchased. When the socialist workers ran out of the pamphlets before the next shipment arrived, 12 people put money down in advance.

Sixty-four other books were sold, with the speeches of Thomas Sankara topping the list, and the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* in second place. Also purchased were multiple copies of titles on South Africa and Cuba, as well as *Panama: The Truth about the U.S. Invasion*, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*, and more. Six people took advantage of a special offer of \$12 for both the Congo pamphlet and an introductory subscription to the *Militant*.

Socialist workers sold more than \$1,100 worth of literature in the first week and met



Militant/Cappy Kidd

Dozens of moviegoers stopped by literature table to buy books and discuss politics

a wide range of people who want to discuss the challenges facing the fight against imperialism today. After seeing the interest in these discussions and in revolutionary books from Pathfinder, they decided to follow the movie to its next 12-day run at another art-film house. There, the managers invited the socialists to have a table indoors. One of the young managers said he "grew up with Pathfinder."

At the table many who attended the movie asked questions to find out more about the events depicted in the film and about current world political developments. As one new *Militant* subscriber said, "The movie made me feel devastated and hopeful in alternating moments. But I want to do something to change things."

Several people traveled three or four hours to see the film, including many African students from the Congo, South Africa, and Burkina Faso studying in Indiana and Wisconsin.

Many of the filmgoers said they had visited Cuba and especially appreciate the comparison of what the more experienced revolutionaries in Cuba were able to accomplish in routing the imperialists at the Bay of Pigs only three months after the assassination of Lumumba.

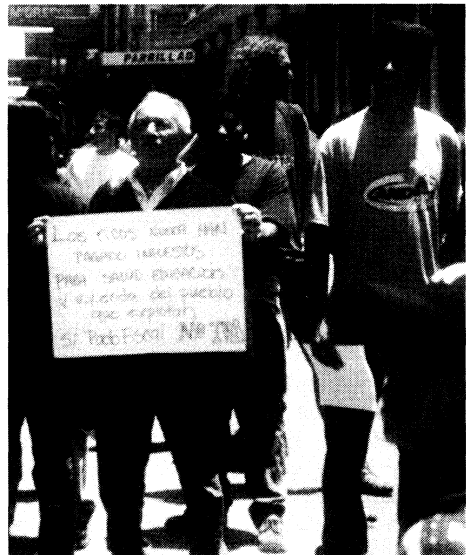
One young Black man saw the movie three times, bringing two or three different friends with him each time. When asked what motivated him, he said, "You have to see this movie. Lumumba was a freedom fighter and we need that today in this country."

Guatemala protests condemn tax increase

BY RON RICHARDS
AND LOIDA MARTÍNEZ

GUATEMALA CITY—A wave of protests has swept this Central American nation in response to a government decree increasing the Value Added Tax (VAT) from 10 percent to 12 percent. The government has been thrown into its biggest crisis since President Alfonso Portillo took office 18 months ago.

Working people, students, and businesspeople have been holding mass protests against the tax increase, which raises the cost of most goods and services in Gua-



Militant/Ron Richards

Sign at march in Guatemala City says in part: "The rich have never paid taxes."

temala. The measure, which has antagonized business owners, hits workers and farmers particularly hard.

On August 1, thousands of workers, farmers, and students carried out a one-day strike to protest the tax hike, approved by Congress July 26. Cops fired tear gas to disperse the crowd that gathered outside the National Palace, after they had marched through the streets of Guatemala City, the capital. The education ministry closed public schools to prevent youth from carrying out a campus strike, so students instead joined other demonstrators in actions throughout the country.

The strike was called by Guatemala's main business association, CACIF. Around 90 percent of businesses were shut down throughout the capital, according to Chamber of Trade president Jorge Briz.

In the highlands town of Coban, 170 miles north of Guatemala City, 200 angry demonstrators, mostly high school and college students, stormed a police station. The youth abandoned the building after army trucks began to arrive. Soldiers have been patrolling the streets of Coban.

A few hours earlier the government imposed a state of emergency in the city of Totonicapán, 120 miles west of the capital, where protesters burned down the mayor's house, a bank, and a government office in protest against the tax hike.

Daily protests have been held throughout the country, from the capital city to smaller cities such as Quetzaltenango, Retalhuleu, Coatepeque, Jalapa, Mazatenango, Chiquimulilla and San Marcos.



Militant/Ron Richards

Protesters rally July 26 under Guatemalan Workers Confederation banner. Wave of demonstrations against tax increase in Guatemala have thrown government into crisis.

In many cases demonstrators burn tires in the streets, which often leads to massive traffic jams. The bumper sticker "No More Taxes" can be found everywhere, from market stalls to pushcarts used by street vendors. The VAT is a sales tax based on a per-

centage of the value added at each step of the manufacturing and distribution process. Prices rise as the tax is included in the price charged at the next step in the chain from production to consumption. Like other sales taxes, it is highly regressive—that is, working people pay a higher percentage of their income than do wealthy people.

On the morning of July 27, the day after Congress approved the tax measure, several hundred people gathered on the street in front of the national legislature, where there was a line of cops in front of the building. The police had allowed protesters to scale the outside of the building to tie banners to the columns and to address the crowd from a ledge with bullhorns. Most of the people appeared to be college and high school students and street vendors. Many of the vendors wore the distinctive clothing of indigenous women.

In an interview at the protest, Iván Castillo, secretary general of the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala (URNG) in the metropolitan area of Guatemala City, said the government was raising taxes to make payments on its foreign debt, which is now \$4.4 billion in a country of 12.6 million people. The URNG, which waged a guerrilla struggle against the government through the 1980s until a political settlement was signed in 1996, is today part of the electoral opposition to the current government.

Drought, famine in Central America

Continued from front page

lation most affected," said Francisco Roque Castro, WFP's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean. WFP representatives have said that the relief program will not be able to maintain its efforts for more than a month because "they don't have any more food to do it." The WFP has appealed for international donors to respond to the crisis.

The U.S. ambassador to Managua, Oliver Garza, announced that Washington—which backed a dictatorship in Nicaragua for decades, and then spent billions in an attempt to overturn a workers and peasants revolution in 1979—intends to provide a mere \$6 million in food packages through nongovernmental organizations to feed 125,000 people over the next four months. It will distribute an additional \$10 million for next year. The WFP has said that it needs at least \$7.5 million worth of food for the next three months, to provide for people who have lost between half and all of their crops.

As with other semicolonial countries, the social catastrophe in Nicaragua has quickly brought into sharp focus the chronic impoverishment and underdevelopment imperialism has imposed on Central America. Marvin Ponce, from the Coordinating Council of Peasant Organizations of Honduras, pointed out that "the famine is not because of the drought, but because people have no money to buy food."

With the majority of arable land largely concentrated in the hands of a small number of landowning families and international corporations, millions of peasants depend for their subsistence on crops they grow as sharecroppers or on meager wages earned in large farms growing export crops.

Provoked by a drop in the price of coffee on the international market, lack of financial assistance, and bank foreclosures, farm owners have drastically cut or dismissed their workforces entirely. These moves have left some 12,000 families in the coffee producing region of Matagalpa and Jinotega without any way to survive. Some of the farm workers had not received wages for three months.

The Nicaraguan daily *El Nuevo Diario* reported that in the municipality of El Tuma-La Dalia in Matagalpa, which is responsible for producing 20 percent of the national coffee production, the fields are ruined.

The mayor of La Dalia told *El Nuevo Diario* that the municipal council had declared a state of economic emergency since they knew that the drop in the coffee prices will bring about a social disaster in the countryside that will rapidly spread to the cities.

Nicaraguan president Arnoldo Alemán dismissed the need to declare a national

emergency, claiming food was guaranteed and his opponents were overblowing the issue for political reasons.

Many peasants families have also set up roadblocks, stopping trucks and other vehicles to ask for food, money, or medicine from passengers. "We are hungry, we want jobs to feed our kids," the peasants told a reporter for *El Nuevo Diario* as he drove by.

A group of 600 former members of the Sandinista army, as well as those who had belonged to counterrevolutionary band demobilized at the end of the armed conflict in the late 1980s, traveled through rural areas in the northern and central part of the country. They occupied thousands of acres of land in the municipality of Tipitapa, in Managua.

Meanwhile, Honduras has declared a state of emergency in 104 of its 298 municipalities. Eighty percent of the corn, beans, and sorghum crops has been lost. The minister of commerce and industry said that prod-

ucts will need to be imported if the grain reserves that have been released don't alleviate the situation.

Government officials in Honduras have already hinted that inflation will rise, and their counterparts in Nicaragua have said the price of bread could increase by 40 percent because of a rise in prices by the main flour distributors.

El Salvador is also being affected by an epidemic of respiratory infections, flu, and gastrointestinal diseases. So far 177 children have died from respiratory infections and 52 from diarrhea in the course of the year. More than 880,000 cases of respiratory infections have been reported, according to the ministry of health.

The Los Angeles daily *La Opinion* reported that El Salvador's medical association has insisted that the government declare a state of emergency. It states that the spiral of illnesses is a social problem that has plagued the country for many decades.

Peasants in Colombia demand debt relief

BY RÓGER CALERO

Responding to a call by peasant organizations in Colombia, thousands of working people have blocked several of the main highways in the country. Facing ruin, the peasants are demanding government relief, including cancellation of their debts, an end to imports of agricultural products that can be grown in the country, and suspension of all negotiations around the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The small farmers and peasants are also demanding the government stop spraying drug crops and establish guaranteed prices for other crops in order to have a sustainable income.

The strongest center of the strike has been in the area of the country that grows coffee. It has been organized by National Coffee Growers Unity, one of the main groups promoting the demand to cancel the debt of coffee growers, who have been harshly affected by the drop in prices for their product on the international market.

Minister of Agriculture Rodrigo Villalba and other government officials have rejected these calls for debt relief. Villalba said the strike is an attack against the economy of the region, and claimed it was unfair since the government had already taken measures to help growers.

With thousands of small growers facing foreclosure the government has offered to renegotiate the debt and reopen lines of credit.

The strike has been opposed by large

landowners.

The general secretary of the Central Federation of Democratic Workers in Colombia, Julio Roberto Gómez, expressed the solidarity and support of the labor federa-

tion for the strike and said it was the result of "an absurd and unacceptable economic opening." Gómez was referring to the growth in the amount of food imports from 700,000 tons to 8 million tons since 1990.

Writer is jailed for contempt in Texas

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—The jailing of a free-lance writer for refusing to turn over to a federal prosecutor some material she's preparing for a book poses a threat to freedom of the press and First Amendment rights here.

Vanessa Leggett, 33, an author from Austin, Texas, was found in contempt of court July 20 by U.S. District judge Melinda Harmon in a close court hearing in Houston for refusing to turn over her research notes to a grand jury investigating a murder case.

She has been held in a Harris County jail without bail since then. Leggett, who is appealing her contempt citation in the federal courts, could remain in jail for up to 18 months under current law.

"I just feel like I'm doing what I have to do to protect my First Amendment right to freedom of the press," the author said before surrendering to authorities, "I feel like what they are doing is wrong."

Leggett had been working on a book about the April 16, 1997, murder of Doris Angleton, 36, who was shot to death in her home in Houston's exclusive River Oaks

neighborhood. Angleton was the wife of millionaire Robert Angleton, an ex-bookie and cop informant. He was later accused of arranging the slaying through his brother, Roger Angleton. Both men were jailed on capital murder charges. Roger Angleton later committed suicide while in jail.

Although acquitted of murder in August 1998, Robert Angleton has since become the focus of a federal grand jury investigation.

In preparing for the 1998 trial, the local Houston prosecutor obtained a subpoena for the notes and tapes of an interview Leggett had conducted with Roger Angleton while in jail awaiting trial.

In a negotiated deal with state prosecutors, Leggett agreed to turn over copies of the notes and tapes. Leggett's attorney, Michael DeGuerin who negotiated the deal recently disclosed that the district attorney's office in Houston has already given federal officials the copies of Leggett's notes and tapes from her interview with Roger Angleton. But now federal authorities want "all the material she has, all of her research archives over the last four years" concern-

Continued on next page

Sugar cane growers, peasants in Mexico protest growing crisis

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of peasants are expected to converge on the capital of Mexico August 8 to demand immediate payment for their crops, the revision of portions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) affecting the imports of grains and other products, and release of more government resources for peasants and small farmers. Marches and rallies in front of government buildings are also being organized in 194 rural districts and various states.

"This is not a national conspiracy," said Alvaro López Ríos, a coordinator of the coalition of peasant organizations involved in the actions, but an alarm bell about "the possibility of a social explosion." Brutal conditions of exploitation of millions of peasants in Mexico have been aggravated by protectionist barriers imposed by Washington, the sharpening of already unequal competition with giant agricultural corporations in the United States, and low prices in the international market.

Last month some 5,000 sugar cane farmers protested in front of government offices in Mexico City demanding \$420 million in unpaid wages. These small growers, the majority growing cane on plots with an average size of only four acres, sell their crops at government-set prices to any of Mexico's 60 sugar mills. They are supposed to receive payment for the crops before the end of the season in May.

U.S. limits imports

The sugar mill owners say they have not paid growers for their crops because they have been affected by a drop in the price of sugar and are being unfairly kept out of the U.S. market. For many growers the payment from the mill is the only income they will receive the entire year.

The Mexican government claims that the original NAFTA agreement allowed Mexico to export all its excess sugar—an estimated 500,000 tons—without any tariffs to the United States as of last October. But the U.S. government has limited Mexico's sugar exports to 116,000 tons a year in order to protect the American sugar industry. This was done in a unilateral move when Washington introduced a "side letter" to the trade agreement, something the Mexican government refuses to recognize. It has generated what some in Mexico have referred to as a "sugar war."

The sugar industry represents 3.5 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product and employs close to half a million workers. It's vital to the economy of 227 municipalities in 15 states. The Mexican daily *La Jornada* called the crisis in Mexico's sugar industry the worst in its history.

In addition to the protectionist measures, Mexico's sugar has been affected by grow-

ing imports of high fructose corn syrup from the United States for use by the soft drink industry. From 1994, when NAFTA took effect, to the end of last year, some 1.3 million tons of fructose have been imported into Mexico.

Faced with growing pressures from the sugar industry, the Mexican government imposed tariffs to limit the imports of the sweetener. According to *La Jornada*, some 280,000 tons of highly subsidized corn used to make the fructose comes into the country from the United States with zero tariffs.

The 3.5 million corn growers in Mexico have also been affected by a 45 percent drop in corn prices in the last three years. In July, farmers in the state of Sinaloa, unable to sell 2.4 million tons of corn due to the market being flooded with imports from the United States, blocked access to gas depots demanding higher tariffs.

"The control of trade and production is more and more in the hands of transnational corporations," said Alberto Gómez of the National Union of Autonomous Peasant Regional Organizations. He said 50 international corporations dominate production and sales of food products in the world. Six enterprises dominate 85 percent of the trade of cereal and another six control 80 percent of coffee sales, he said.

The protests in Mexico included a national strike last December by tens of thousands of mill workers demanding a 25 percent wage increase and improved retirement benefits.

Rice producers affected

Along with corn producers in Sinaloa, rice farmers in the state of Campeche carried out takeovers demanding the renegotiation of \$4 million in loans. In the border state of Chihuahua farmers forced back



Sugar cane farmers protest outside a government office in Mexico City. Swamped by imports and facing export restrictions imposed by the United States, thousands of peasants are demonstrating across Mexico, demanding government relief.

grain shipments from the United States.

Pedro Alejandro Díaz explained to *La Jornada* that this year's rice production will drop to 180,000 tons from 260,000 last year, while imports rose by 60,000 tons. Farmers growing coffee, beans or wheat, or raising hogs or cattle face similar situations, with declining opportunities to sell their products on the market, said Díaz.

"Poverty and migration have not torn the peasants from their plots of land because they have a cultural expression and a way of life that the current rulers despise," said Max Correa, a leader of the Cardenista Peasant Confederation, referring to the resistance going on in the countryside.

"President [Vicente] Fox and [Secretary of Agriculture Javier] Usabiaga can put up with this situation because their economic problems are solved. But this is not so for farmers who are impoverished and lack capital," added Alvaro López, the coordinator for the Permanent Agrarian Congress.

Meanwhile, a dispute in the U.S. ruling class has erupted over allowing trucks from Mexico to enter the United States, another

measure supposedly given the green light under the NAFTA accords. The U.S. Senate passed a measure aimed at preventing trucks from Mexico from traveling more than 20 miles into the United States by imposing stringent safety checks and insurance requirements on them.

A five-member NAFTA arbitration panel previously ruled that the United States is violating NAFTA's trucking provision by blocking access. The Teamsters union has waged a major protectionist campaign urging Congress to impose restrictions that in effect mean trucks from Mexico will be denied entry to the United States beyond the current 20-mile limit.

Mexican president Fox has said that he will not allow U.S. trucks into Mexico until an "equitable and well-thought-out agreement" on the issue is reached. "If no agreement is reached, there won't be any Mexican trucks up there, because they don't want them, but there won't be any American trucks down here, either." President George Bush has said that he would veto the Senate bill because it violates the trade agreement.

Imperialist oil rush raises tensions in Caspian Sea

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The imperialists' rush to exploit potential oil reserves in the Caspian Sea is bringing in its wake increasing tensions in the region. On July 23 an Iranian naval ship forced two oil exploration vessels of BP, the British oil giant with vast U.S. holdings, from a disputed area of the Caspian Sea. According to the *Financial Times*, an Iranian military jet flew over the oil vessels for two hours before the patrol boat confronted them in what the Iranian government considers its territorial waters.

British Petroleum officials say they were operating under authority of the government of Azerbaijan, which also lays claim to the area, as does Turkmenistan.

The incident highlights the stakes in the region, involving potential profits of hundreds of billions of dollars from oil and gas sales. The governments of the five countries that surround the sea—Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan—are jockeying for their share of an estimated 70 billion to 200 billion barrels of oil that are buried beneath the sea bed. The Russian and Iranian governments argue that previous treaties and international national boundaries give them the largest share of the area.

"The West broadly backs Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, where their oil companies have invested heavily," said the *Economist*, referring to Washington, London, and other imperialist powers. U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice warned Tehran about the incident while speaking to reporters in Moscow, saying, "We believe that the Iranians need to be dealt with pretty clearly on issues like this and on issues like weapons of mass destruction."

Washington is bent on grabbing the lion's share of the oil wealth in the Caspian Sea, putting it on a collision course with Moscow and Iran. "Getting assured access to the region would be a major asset for the West," said Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former U.S. national security adviser who has been pushing for building an oil pipeline in the region. For the past six years the U.S. government has been pushing the construction of a major oil export pipeline from the



Map shows location of oil giant BP's exploration ship Geofizik-3 and disputed borders in Caspian Sea.

Caspian Sea via Georgia to Turkey.

Although the longest and most expensive alternative, "this route is favored by the United States government," reported the *Washington Post*, "which sees it as a way to build up Turkey, assure delivery of oil to the Mediterranean through friendly territory, and promote as much independence as possible in the former Soviet Republics. American oil companies, however, say they would need big subsidies because of the expense." This route would also bypass Russia and Iran. In November 1999 former U.S. president William Clinton supervised the signing of a deal between the governments of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia to build the pipeline.

Washington has also been probing for openings to establish a military presence in the region. In 1997 the Pentagon conducted military exercises in Kazakhstan that in-

cluded U.S. troops and soldiers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan—former Soviet republics on Russia's southern flank.

Currently only Moscow and Tehran have a significant naval presence in the Caspian Sea. Last month the Kremlin announced that three new warships were joining its fleet in the Caspian. In January its armada conducted military maneuvers with live ammunition, then anchored the warships off Baku before asking permission.

The Russian government is trying to regain lost influence in the Caspian basin following the collapse of the Soviet Union when the Caspian republics broke into Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Russia. The Soviet Union was once the world's largest oil producer, pumping a peak of 12.5 million barrels a day in 1988. This year the combined oil exports from the former Soviet oil-producing states of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan are projected to be around 3 million barrels a day.

Meanwhile, the U.S. oil giants, Chevron and ExxonMobil, are sinking their roots deep into Kazakhstan. Chevron obtained a 50 percent interest in the Tengiz oil field and began building an "American village" for its executives in the port city of Atyrau. "The \$50 million complex promises to be an island of American suburbia," commented Steve LeVine, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. "In summer, Chevron families will splash in pools fed by a self-contained water-purification system."

Atyrau, often plagued with water shortages, is one of the poorest areas in Kazakhstan, where an estimated half of the country's 14.9 million people live on \$1 a day or less.

Oil was recently discovered in the Kashagan oil field located off the shore of Kazakhstan. Industry official estimate it could contain as much as 50 billion barrels of oil. A consortium of nine imperialist-based oil companies has been conducting oil drilling in the Kashagan field, including Britain's BG Group, Italy's ENI SpA, ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch/Shell Group, and France's TotalFinaElf.

Writer jailed in Texas

Continued from previous page

ing Doris Angleton's slaying.

He noted that Leggett now regrets cooperating with the district attorney's office in 1998 and has decided to stop providing materials to investigators.

Since 1973 the U.S. attorney general has been required to approve every federal subpoena issued to a reporter as well as every request by federal prosecutors to arrest a reporter.

According to an article in the August 1 *Washington Post*, "The Justice Department does not consider Leggett a bona fide journalist and does not believe she is protected by rules governing reporters."

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and the Society of Professional Journalists have filed a brief on Leggett's behalf with the appeals court. They argued such government actions threaten the independence of a free press guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The Justice Department last jailed a reporter in 1991, when four South Carolina journalists were locked up for eight hours when they refused to testify at the corruption trial of a state senator.

Capitalist agriculture is the art of robbing the earth

Advancing fight for socialism requires closing social and cultural gap between town and country

Below is the second in a four-part series the *Militant* is running on "Communism and Labor's Transformation of Nature." The series was occasioned by a letter to the editor from Karl Butts, a farmer from Florida, commenting on an article in our July 2 issue, "Cubans celebrate 40th anniversary of farmers organization."

That article, Butts said, provided a good summary of what Cuban farmers have accomplished over the past four decades as a result of the socialist revolution and land reform in that country. But he was concerned that a sentence in the closing paragraph could be read to imply that communists lend credence to the concept that organic agriculture is "preferable to that where 'chemicals' are used" and even that "Cuba generally chooses not to use chemicals in agricultural production."

The first installment in this series clarified that the anti-science prejudices of concern to Butts have nothing in common with the views of the communist workers movement, either today or at any time since its origins in the days of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The article reviewed Marx and Engels's materialist explanation of the relationship between human labor and nature. And it reported on a discussion of these issues at a leadership meeting of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) held in New York City in May.



BY STEVE CLARK

The communist movement organized further political discussion and education around these questions at an international Active Workers Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, in mid-June. These matters were addressed, among other ways, in the talk and closing conference summary by SWP leader Jack Barnes, as well as in a class on "Communists and Labor's Social Transformation of Nature" presented by the author of this series of articles.

In his conference talk, Barnes called attention to the statement of purpose at the beginning of the constitution of the Socialist Workers Party. "The purpose of the party," it says, "shall be to educate and organize the working class in order to establish a workers and farmers government, which will abolish capitalism in the United



Above, Militant/Hank Sheer; Right, Granma
Above, farmers protest in Bogor, Indonesia, September 1998, demanding return of land confiscated by government. Imperialist-imposed social relations result in poverty, hunger, and illiteracy in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Right, literacy workers in Cuba carry out their work in camp of Revolutionary National Militia in 1961 during campaign involving 100,000 volunteer youth that wiped out illiteracy.



States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism."

Barnes pointed out that winning that goal—joining with workers and farmers of all lands "in the worldwide struggle for socialism"—necessitates closing the enormous gap in economic, social, and cultural conditions among working people of different countries, and toilers of city and countryside. These inequitable conditions are inherited from millennia of class society and have been reproduced and often widened by the imperialist world order for more than a century.

A world perspective

Roughly 2 billion people, for example, have no access to modern energy—either

to electricity, or to modern sources of fuel for cooking and heating. Candles and kerosene for lighting, and wood, dung, thatch, and straw for fuel (all with their noxious fumes, harmful both to humans and the earth's atmosphere) are the reality for at least one-third of the world's population. And the World Bank, which is the source of these statistics, notes that "even this figure may understate the number without access, because some countries (India, for example) count all households in a village as being electrified if the village has one streetlight and one electric water pump!"

Altogether the imperialist countries of North America, Europe, and the Pacific, with 14 percent of the world's population, consume 57 percent of the electricity. Excluding Japan and China, on the other hand, the countries of Asia and the Pacific, with 31 percent of the world's population, consume only 10 percent of the electricity; and the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, with nearly 10 percent of the world's population, consume only 1 percent of the electricity.

Another indication of this global inequality perpetuated by the world capitalist system can be seen in the application of the most productive farming techniques. While in the imperialist countries there are 16 tractors in use for every 1,000 acres of farmland, there are only three in use on average elsewhere in the world. And with the exception of the rice-producing Third World countries of East Asia, the application of fertilizer per acre is much higher in North America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

This imperialist-imposed backwardness in agriculture and industry has devastating effects on the economic, social, and cultural conditions of working people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. According to even the understated estimates of big capital's own international agencies, some 47 percent of the world's population—nearly half—subsist on less than \$2 a day. Forty percent have no access to basic sanitation.

Very conservative estimates count at least 1 billion adults as being illiterate worldwide—more than a quarter of all adults in the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This includes 60 percent of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa and 55 per-

cent in South Asia, with much higher rates for women both in these regions and most of the rest of the world.

And as Butts notes at the close of his letter, some 800 million people worldwide are estimated by the United Nations World Food Program to be chronically hungry, with many more suffering from malnutrition.

Continuity with bolshevism

The preconditions to advancing the struggle for socialism on a world scale today remain fundamentally the same as those presented eight decades ago by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin. In explaining the centrality of the effort to advance the industrialization of the young Soviet republic in February 1920, Lenin said:

We must show the peasants that the organization of industry on the basis of modern, advanced technology, on electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to raise the level of culture in the countryside and to overcome, even in the most remote corners of the land, backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease, and barbarism. ("Report on the Work of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee," Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 30, p. 335.)

The construction of socialism, Lenin said in late December of that year, requires more than just literacy among the toilers engaged in that historic effort. "We need cultured, enlightened and educated working people," he said, so that not only urban workers but "the majority of the peasants [are] aware of the tasks awaiting us." ("Speech to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets," Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 518).

Traditional methods?

Karl Butts is correct that the fetish of "organic" farming "has nothing to do with the fight to feed the world."

Those who would reject progress in agricultural chemistry and technology in favor of so-called natural or traditional methods of farming should recall three things:

First, life expectancy at birth in the earliest agricultural communities some 10,000 years ago was well under 30 years of age.

Second, as a result of scientific advances in plant breeding, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and mechanization, world grain yields have doubled since 1960, while it took 1,000 years in England for wheat yields to quadruple to their current level.

Third, there are few methods so destructive to the environment and inimical to sustainable food production as slash-and-burn agriculture and overgrazing, both typical of so-called traditional farming in much of the world. The application of relatively modern methods of crop rotation, feedlots, and use of fertilizer and pesticides register enormous and "unnatural" progress in recent centuries for both human beings and the environment in which we live and labor.

The communist movement understands that the history of capitalist agriculture has been one that combines advances in the productivity of farm labor, on the one hand, with, on the other hand, profit-maximizing methods that exhaust and erode the soil, pollute water sources, and poison farmers, workers, and consumers.

What we can learn from Marx

Marx wrote about these questions at length in *Capital*, at a time when big advances in the knowledge of the chemistry of soil fertility were making possible the application of synthetic fertilizers to counteract the exhaustion of fields and substantially increase yields. The first factory producing "superphosphate" fertilizers began operating in Britain in 1843, to be followed in Germany, France, and the United States over the next three decades.

Marx answered various early bourgeois writers on farming who, "on account of the state of agricultural chemistry in their time" made the false claim that "there is a limit to the amount of capital which can be invested in a spatially limited field." To the contrary,

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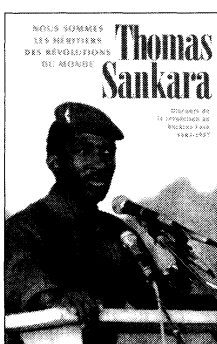
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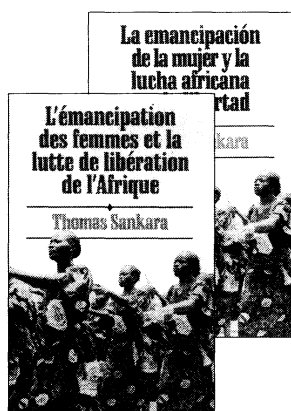
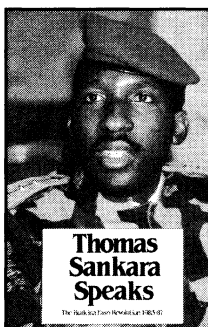
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e soil and the worker

en working people worldwide

Marx said in *Capital*, the earth "continuously improves, as long as it is treated correctly."

In fact, he said, agriculture has an advantage over factory production in this regard. New machinery depreciates with use, he pointed out, and investments in new industrial technology tend to make prior improvements obsolete. With the soil, however, "successive capital investments can have their benefit without the earlier ones being lost." (*Capital*, Penguin Classics edition, vol. 3, pp. 915-916.)

At the same time, Marx recognized that the application of all scientific and technological advances under bourgeois social relations is subject to the competition of capitals to maximize profits. In the very next chapter of *Capital*, "The Genesis of Capitalist Ground-Rent," he pointed to the consequences of capital's growing domination of agriculture, which drives more and more small, family farmers into hopeless debt and off the land.

This process, Marx wrote, "reduces the agricultural population to an ever decreasing minimum and confronts it with an ever growing industrial population crammed together in large towns.... The result of this is a squandering of the vitality of the soil." Marx continued:

Large-scale industry and industrially pursued large-scale agriculture have the same effect. If they are originally distinguished by the fact that the former lays waste and ruins labour-power and thus the natural power of man, whereas the latter does the same to the natural power of the soil, they link up in the later course of development, since the industrial system applied to agriculture also enervates the workers there, while industry and trade for their part provide agriculture with the means of exhausting the soil. (*Capital*, vol. 3, pp. 950.)

Marx had made the same point, perhaps even more compellingly, in a section of *Capital* entitled, "Large-scale industry and agriculture." He wrote:

A conscious, technological application of science replaces the previous highly irrational and slothfully traditional way of working. The capitalist mode of production completes the disintegration of the primitive familial union which bound agriculture and manufacture together when they were both at an undeveloped and childlike stage. But at the same time it creates the material conditions for a new and higher synthesis, a union of agriculture and industry....

While capitalism "creates the material conditions" for such an advance, Marx continued, the propertied families' ruthless exploitation of both human beings and nature create an insuperable obstacle to the progress of civilization. He wrote:

In modern agriculture, as in urban industry, the increase in the productivity and the mobility of labour is purchased at the cost of laying waste and debilitating labour-power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress towards ruining the more long-lasting sources of that fertility.... Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker. (*Capital*, volume 1, pp. 637-638.)

Frederick Engels, Marx's lifelong collaborator in the leadership of the communist movement, also described this process in many of his writings, including the 1876 article "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man." It is published as an appendix to Engels's book, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.

"What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba," Engels wrote, "who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertilizer for one generation of highly profitable coffee trees—what cared they that the heavy

tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the now-unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock!

"In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the first, the most tangible result; and then surprise is even expressed that the most remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be of quite a different, mainly even of quite an opposite character...." (*Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, pp. 238)

Imperialism, the pyromaniac

Engels's example, drawn from the early years of capitalism in the 18th and early 19th centuries, remains an apt description of the rapacious and destructive course of international finance capital to this day. It calls to mind the 1986 speech to an international conference on trees and forests in Paris, presented by Thomas Sankara, the leader of the 1983-87 popular revolutionary government of the West African country of Burkina Faso, a former French colony.

Sankara described the "creeping desert" in Burkina and a number of other countries at the northern edge of Sub-Saharan Africa. Exhaustion of the soil—which advances month by month, year by year across an entire swath of the continent—is contributing to the hunger, disease, and economic and social devastation of millions.

"I have come to join with you in deploring the harshness of nature," Sankara told the conference, whose participants included the president of France and other top figures in the imperialist government. "But I have also come to denounce the one whose selfishness is the source of his neighbor's misfortune. Colonialism has pillaged our forests without the least thought of replen-



Women in Burkina Faso terrace soil to control erosion in 1986. Soil exhaustion contributes to devastation of lives of millions. Thomas Sankara, leader of 1983-87 revolutionary Burkina Faso government, said that the "battle against the encroachment of the desert and to save the forests is above all a struggle against imperialism."

ishing them for our tomorrows." Sankara continued:

The unpunished destruction of the biosphere by savage and murderous forays on the land and in the air continues.... Those who have the technological means to find the culprits have no interest in doing so, and those who have an interest in doing so lack the necessary technological means. They have only their intuition and their firm conviction.

We are not against progress, but we want progress that is not carried out anarchically and with criminal neglect for other people's rights. We therefore

wish to affirm that the battle against the encroachment of the desert is a battle to establish a balance between man, nature, and society. As such, it is a battle that is above all political, one whose outcome is not determined by fate....

As Karl Marx said, those who live in a palace do not think the same things, nor in the same way, as those who live in a hut. This struggle to defend the trees and the forests is above all a struggle against imperialism. Imperialism is the pyromaniac setting fire to our forests and savannahs. (*Thomas Sankara Speaks*, Pathfinder Press, pp. 154-156)

To be continued next week

'The working-class road to peace'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—"The Working-Class Road to Peace and a Livable Environment" was the topic of a lively Militant Labor Forum presented here August 3 by Norton Sandler, organizer of the New York Socialist Workers Party.

Speaking several days before the 56th anniversary of Washington's dropping of nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Sandler pointed out the U.S. rulers "couch their war efforts as paving the road to peace."

In fact Washington justifies its use of the atomic bombs at the end of World War II by saying the action "saved American lives" and brought peace to the world.

Some who consider themselves radicals have bought into this argument, Sandler explained. But at the time the *Militant* pointed out the truth with its Aug. 18, 1945, banner headline: "There is no peace." Two weeks after the bombing SWP leader James P. Cannon gave a speech elaborating on this assessment.

"What a commentary on the real nature of capitalism in its decadent phase is this," Cannon said, "that the scientific conquest of the marvelous secret of atomic energy, which might rationally be used to lighten the burdens of all mankind, is employed first for the wholesale destruction of half a million people."

"In two calculated blows, with two atomic bombs, American imperialism killed or injured half a million human beings," continued Cannon. "This is how American imperialism is bringing civilization to the Orient. What an unspeakable atrocity!

What a shame has come to America, the America that once placed in New York harbor a Statue of Liberty enlightening the world. Now the world recoils in horror from her name."

Today, the U.S. rulers are on a drive to expand their nuclear dominance through the development and deployment of an antiballistic missile shield based on land, sea, and in outer space, emphasized Sandler. This is one reflection of the fact that since Washington began its preparations for the

imperialist assault on Iraq in the summer of 1990, U.S. imperialism has stepped up the use of its superior military might as a way to deal blows to rival imperialist powers in Europe—Germany and France especially—and Japan. The war against the Iraqi people was an extension of the employers' assault against working people in the United States, Sandler said.

In looking at this and all political questions, class-conscious workers begin with

Continued on page 10

Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State

Frederick Engels

Includes the appendix, "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man," in which Engels explains that capitalist production, including agriculture, is concerned with only "the most immediate results." As long as the "usual coveted profit" is made, the capitalist is satisfied and unconcerned with human, environmental, or other consequences. \$17.95

Capitalism's World Disorder

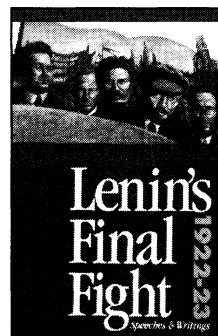
Jack Barnes

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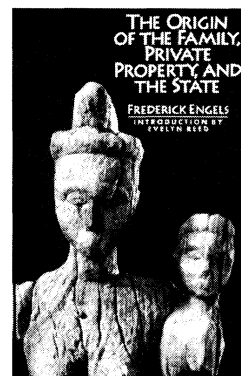


Lenin's Final Fight

Speeches and Writings, 1922-23

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'The working-class road to peace'

Continued from Page 9

a historical perspective and the interests of the workers and farmers of the world, the SWP leader explained. "For us there is no 'we' called the American people. The United States is a class-divided society," he said. "The only 'we' is workers and farmers of the world and the only 'them' is the employers, the super-wealthy ruling class."

The Bush administration has taken up the mantle from the Clinton administration and is pushing ahead with the U.S. ruling-class drive to set aside the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM)—signed by Washington and Moscow in 1972—and try to deploy a system capable of shooting down missiles, particularly in their "boost" phase. "Their goal is to distance themselves even further from all the other atomic powers—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom as well as India, Pakistan, and Israel," stated Sandler. And this will put increased pressure on the U.S. rulers' imperialist competitors, as well as Russia, to try to close this gap.

Washington is undertaking extensive research with plans for testing and developing a broad array of weaponry to be stationed in outer space—from chemical lasers to interceptors to more sensor-laden satellites in orbit. Sandler pointed to one such project, as reported in *The Observer* published in the United Kingdom, to develop a "space-bomber," which "could destroy targets on the other side of the world within 30 minutes."

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld describes this vehicle as being "valuable for conducting rapid global strikes." The *Observer* noted, "The craft,—which would set the scene for a new generation of stratospheric warfare—would be able to drop precision bombs from a height of 60 miles, flying at 15 times the speed and 10 times the height of America's current bomber fleet."

Sandler pointed to the attack recently launched on Bush's missile shield plans by Democratic congressman Richard Gephardt, the House minority leader. He charged that Bush's policy was "unilateralist" and undermines relations with European allies. "Gephardt argues that nuclear deterrence—sometimes called Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD—still works and urges the U.S. rulers to keep the MAD framework," said Sandler.

"This is the alternative those on the left of bourgeois politics present for humanity," he said. "No to missile defense; yes to

MAD! But this is certainly not the framework working-class fighters should accept. Instead, workers and farmers can chart a course of revolutionary struggle to put in place a government of their own, one whose only interest is leading the fight to overturn capitalism and join with working people around the world in the fight for socialism. This is the only alternative for humanity and the only way to end imperialist war and disarm the war makers," he said.

Negotiations with Russia

At the recent meeting in Genoa, Italy, of leaders of the industrial nations from the Group of Eight, Bush and Russian president Vladimir Putin agreed to substantially reduce their nuclear warheads in exchange for Moscow not opposing Washington's plans for developing a missile shield. "This deal will certainly make many of the governments in Europe unhappy," which have been expressing their concerns over Bush's stated intentions to abrogate the ABM treaty, noted Sandler.

The tentative agreement between Bush and Putin marks a change over the past decades, but one that is not historically different in relations between the workers state in Russia and various imperialist powers. With the end of the Cold War that began in the 1950s, negotiations and treaties with Russia are now a greater part of the inter-imperialist conflict. The government in Russia that represents bureaucratic layers in the state apparatus and wealthy layers in the country, will seek accords with this or that imperialist power to advance their economic, political, and military interests, he said.

Washington's current convergence with Moscow on nuclear weapons is an example of this, Sandler said. For the Russian ruling layers, a massive reduction in the nuclear arsenal would be a big financial relief, since maintaining and updating nuclear weapons is an expensive proposition. In turn, Washington undercuts objections by Germany, France, an other powers in Europe to deployment of the missile defense shield. These European rivals of Washington oppose the plan because it gives Washington an even greater military edge in the world. And Washington gains these advantages while still maintaining what will still be a massive nuclear force.

Prior to World War II, Sandler noted, Joseph Stalin entered into negotiations and



Graphic from article in *New York Times Sunday* magazine edition. "The U.S. military has plans for a diverse arsenal in space," article states. Washington's conflicts with European imperialist powers—Germany and France especially—have sharpened.

treaties with various imperialist powers according to the needs and interests of the bureaucratic caste he headed. The Stalin-Hitler pact, signed in 1939 on the same day the German government invaded Poland, was preceded by a trade agreement between the two countries. Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the Communist International until expelled and exiled by Stalin, said at the time that the Stalinist regime, fearing war with Germany, "preferred the status quo, with Hitler as its ally."

Trotsky noted that without revolution, "the overthrow of Hitler is inconceivable. A victorious revolution in Germany would raise the class-consciousness of the broad masses in the USSR to a very high level and render impossible the further existence of the Moscow tyranny." With Russia as a source of raw materials needed for the German imperialist war machine, Trotsky said Stalin "acts as his [Hitler's] quartermaster."

Today, deals, temporary alliances, treaties, and trade with Russia have once again become part of the inter-imperialist conflict, one which Washington is exploiting to its advantage.

Conflicts between U.S. and Europe

The nations in Europe conflict and compete both with the United States and with each other, said Sandler. The U.S. rulers try to take advantage of the disputes between these countries to promote their own interests and assert themselves as the dominant European power. "It's important to closely follow these conflicts," said Sandler, as tensions between Washington and European powers over economic and military questions are the sharpest conflicts in the world today, and this has been the case for a number of years.

As a point of contrast, Sandler asserted that the U.S. rulers are not going to fight a war with China over Taiwan. In fact ever since U.S. president Richard Nixon visited China in the early 1970s and subsequently recognized Beijing, the long-term direction is for Taiwan to become part of China once again. Leading officials from Dell Computer, which relies on cheap labor for assembling computers, has a sizable part of its operations based in Taiwan. With pressure on profits, rising wages in Taiwan, and potential to expand sales in China, Dell has warned the Taiwanese government it must move ahead with establishing normal trade and economic links with the mainland or else the company may have to shift more of its operations to Hong Kong. Another example of this is the defense minister in Australia telling U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld that his government would not automatically side with the United States in a conflict with China over Taiwan.

In early July, the 20-member European Commission announced that they were blocking the merger of General Electric and

Honeywell—two U.S.-based companies—on grounds that the new giant company would reduce competition in the aerospace industry in Europe. "This is an example of the kind of protectionist measures the rival imperialist powers will take," Sandler said. "The U.S. rulers will never accept this decision, in which European bureaucrats are telling GE what it can or cannot do in the world."

Similarly, the Bush administration has made clear its opposition to a new draft accord, being promoted by the European Union and others, designed to enforce a 1972 ban on biological weapons that calls for on-site inspections. As with a proposed treaty banning small arms and the Kyoto climate accords, Bush simply states that the treaties have nothing to do with their declared intent and that they are ineffective. He calls the bluff of Washington's imperialist rivals. In addition, Sandler said, "The U.S. government maintains the most massive stockpile of biological weapons in the world," and they're not about to back a protocol allowing foreign inspectors to have access to their industrial and military facilities, Sandler said.

The White House is also refusing to ratify the Treaty of Rome, which establishes an International Criminal Court that could potentially be used to prosecute U.S. political and military leaders. Washington is for an international tribunal as long as it runs and control it, like the one in The Hague, Netherlands, said Sandler, but the U.S. rulers will never agree to one where U.S. figures could possibly be indicted as war criminals.

The Bush Doctrine

Sandler pointed to a recent article entitled "The Isolationist President?" by Frank Gaffney Jr., a contributing editor to the right-wing *National Review*, that argues that Bush is simply pursuing a course of action on all these questions aimed at protecting the interests of the U.S. ruling class.

The SWP leader pointed to a couple of other recent opinion columns that shed light on the course of action being pursued by the U.S. ruling class. Writing in June 4 edition of *The Weekly Standard*, conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer announced the advent of what he calls "The Bush Doctrine" in an article subtitled, "ABM, Kyoto, and the New American Unilateralism."

"Today, the United States remains the preeminent economic, military, diplomatic, and cultural power on a scale not seen since the fall of the Roman Empire.... This wish to maintain, augment, and exploit that predominance is what distinguished the new foreign policy of the Bush administration," wrote Krauthammer.

In a July 16 article in the *Jewish World Review* Lawrence Kudlow, chief economist for CNBC, points favorably to the perspective being put forward by former Reagan

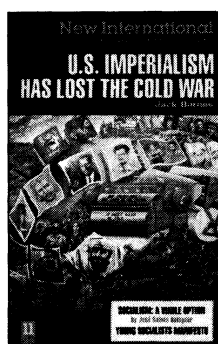
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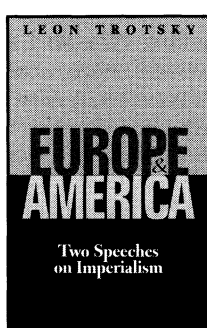
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Washington's Assault on Iraq

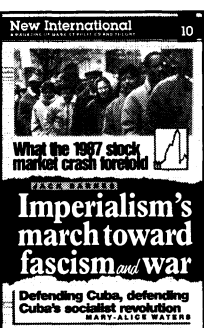
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The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. \$12.00

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- **Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution** by Mary-Alice Waters
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Meat packers in Nebraska step up union drive

Continued from front page

ding system by seniority and a retirement plan.

Maintenance workers at ConAgra's Northern States Beef, also located in South Omaha, ratified their first contract July 8. In addition to an immediate 50 cents an hour increase, the three-year pact provides for annual wage increases, night shift premium pay of \$2 an hour, and improvements in vacation pay and other benefits.

Workers at the Cudahy and Northern States Beef factories waged hard-fought union organizing battles as part of UFCW Local 271's yearlong drive to organize some 4,000 packinghouse workers in South Omaha. Workers voted in the union at the Cudahy plant, but at Northern States Beef only the maintenance workers cast a majority of their ballots for the UFCW. The contract victories at the two plants have given renewed momentum to further organizing efforts, especially at Nebraska Beef.

Bringing experiences to bear

Tiberio Chavez, a maintenance worker at Northern States Beef and a leader of the bargaining committee there, has been attending organizing committee meetings of workers from Nebraska Beef. Chavez and workers from the Cudahy plant are bringing their union experiences to bear in the struggle to organize Nebraska Beef.

"If the workers at Nebraska Beef win, it will mean that they have a voice and can secure better wages and working conditions," he said. "If they win, it will strengthen all of us and help all of us make improvements in our conditions."

Chavez said the production workers from his plant are playing an important role at the Nebraska organizing meetings. "We faced the same lies, intimidation, and harassment that the Nebraska Beef workers are facing as the bosses try to keep the union out. We don't want Nebraska Beef workers to fall into the same traps and make the same mistakes," he said. Chavez reported that the production workers at his plant are discussing launching another organizing effort next year. "Even when you win a union and a contract, the fight continues," Chavez added.

Hilda Guillen, a packinghouse worker and a member UFCW Local 540 from Friona, Texas, is currently assigned as an organizer for the Nebraska Beef campaign.

"I've been through the same mistreatment and the same bad conditions that workers here are going through," she told the *Militant*. "We changed those conditions through the union. No matter how much the company will lie and try to confuse the workers at Nebraska Beef, the two victories at ConAgra and talking to those workers will make it clear that they also need a union."

There are various assessments in the plant on the outcome of the union vote. "I think we are going to win," said one worker at Nebraska Beef. "Many people are afraid to talk about it openly, but they are going to vote for the union. The company runs the line very fast. Many people get injured. Sometimes they get fired or the company does not want to cover their medical expenses."

"It will take more participation and everybody coming together and not being afraid for us to win the election," said Anselm McCrimon, a saw operator in the fabrication department at Nebraska Beef.

Every afternoon, as workers leave the plant, they are greeted by union supporters distributing handbills explaining why workers should support the union and answering the latest company attack on the organizing drive. Among those handing out leaflets have been union field organizers, workers from other industries, union officials from other unions, students, and church members. Many have been organized by Omaha Together/One Community, a coalition of local churches that has been working closely with the UFCW on the drive to organize Omaha packinghouse workers.

Recently, several workers in the plant

have begun joining the leafleting teams. McCrimon, who is among those leading this effort, stated, "When people see us hand-billing, everyone sees that there is no reason to be scared, that there is strength in numbers."

Nebraska Beef bosses responded to the stepped-up handbilling by placing several large trash barrels outside the plant with the words "Union Flyers" crudely stenciled on each barrel. Union supporters report that most workers leaving the plant read and keep the union's handbills, which are printed in Spanish and English.

Pro-union workers have also begun join-

ing union organizers in conducting house visits to talk about the union. Organizers project trying to visit every Nebraska Beef worker at their home before the election date.

The company campaign to defeat the union began in earnest several weeks ago with "information sheets" attached to each employee's paycheck and one-on-one meetings between supervisors and workers. Legally barred from threatening to close the plant if workers vote for the union, pro-company forces have been circulating not-so-subtle rumors of a plant closure.

Workers have been given several photocopies of newspaper articles that supposedly

tie unions to plant closures. For example, the company sarcastically wrote, "Another Union Victory," on an article entitled, "LBT Tells Strikers: Plant Will Close."

Workers in the ground beef department got a taste of what the company projects at a series of "informational meetings." According to a sign posted by the company, the meetings are designed to "assist you in making an informed decision and one you will not regret." A worker at the meeting reports the boss tried to slander a mechanic at ConAgra, in an attempt to undercut the contract victory there, saying the union "is for lazy people and all they want is your money."

Socialist joins Seattle mayoral debate

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—Ernest Mailhot, a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, participated in two recent mayoral debates here as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle.

Several people clapped in the first debate when Mailhot pointed to the exclusion of one of the candidates from the debate. "Omari Tahir-Garrett, an activist in the Black community," stated Mailhot, "is being held on an outrageous bail of \$250,000. This is being done to take the heat off the police who killed Aaron Roberts. I call for all the candidates to speak out against this attack on democratic rights and I further call for the prosecution and jailing of the cops who killed Roberts."

Roberts, a Black resident of Seattle's Central District, was killed May 31. The police claim that he grabbed the arm of a cop and held it while driving, shifting gears, and fighting off another cop, who entered the passenger side of the car and shot Roberts. Witnesses have come forward to contradict this police cover-up.

A few weeks after several protests against the cop killing of Roberts, Mayor Paul Schell spoke in the Central District at an event the *Seattle Weekly* described as "primarily white," and "developer-oriented." This activity angered many in the Black community as it was held at the same place where Roberts died at the hands of the police. It was during a protest of this event that Tahir-Garrett was arrested and charged with hitting the mayor.

None of the other candidates spoke directly about the cop killing or Tahir-Garrett's bail, which was later lowered to \$25,000. In the second debate Mailhot also called for the firing of the cops who lined up a group of Asian youth against a wall for 45 minutes and taunted them with racial abuse. The cops claim they stopped the youth for supposedly jaywalking.

Mayor Schell responded to the socialist candidates comments by saying the Seattle police force was a very good police force. Mark Sidran, the city attorney and another Democratic Party candidate for mayor, defended the cops by saying they were needed in the Black community because, according to him, so many Blacks commit crimes against other Blacks.

Schell said progress was being made in providing low-income housing, and he and another big-business candidate, County



Militant/Jeff Hamill

Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle, Ernest Mailhot, (second from left) participating in mayoral debate. Mailhot pointed to the growing resistance by workers and farmers here and around the world to growing crisis of capitalism system.

Councilman Greg Nickels, said they supported the building of a multibillion dollar light rail system to deal with Seattle's traffic problem. Mailhot explained that with an estimated 6,500 homeless people in Seattle, progress was not being made on this front and that the proposed light rail system was widely seen by working people as being an inadequate and costly plan that would disrupt whole communities. Mailhot called for a massive, government-funded public works program that would provide jobs at union scale wages to build much needed affordable housing, and transportation that would be accessible and inexpensive for all, as well as hospitals, child-care centers, and more.

Mailhot pointed out that Washington is preparing for more wars abroad—both against its imperialist rivals and against working people resisting the worsening conditions imposed by capitalism. He pointed to the U.S. military's use of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for practice naval maneuvers and the billions being spent "for the development of Washington's nuclear first-strike capacity" through its antiballistic missile program. "War, racism, police brutality, and assaults on our unions is what the

Democrats and Republicans have to offer," he said.

In the debates Mailhot pointed to the growing resistance among working people to the effects of capitalism. "Many of you may think the big-business candidates here are more realistic than I am," stated Mailhot. "And they are, in the sense that they offer more of the same of capitalist degradation, economic crisis, war, and racism. My campaign is the only realistic one because it offers the only solution for workers, farmers and youth today: joining the fight to replace the capitalist government with one of workers and farmers that will be part of the worldwide struggle to get rid of capitalism once and for all."

Mailhot was mentioned in several newspaper articles as the candidate who points to the Cuban Revolution as the example for working people. Several of Mailhot's co-workers at the meatpacking plant where he is employed are following the campaign. After reading Mailhot's campaign brochure, one co-worker said he thought it was great that the socialist candidate talked about international struggles, including the fight for independence of Puerto Rico and defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Socialist seeks ballot spot in Massachusetts

Continued from front page

humanity," he said. "Capitalism is heading the world into more wars, economic crisis, and racist assaults," he said. "It keeps the vast majority of the world's population in chains of backwardness and oppression. Its wars and exploitation of working people around the world is simply an extension of its policy at home—something workers and farmers here know firsthand."

It's important to remember, Satter said, that the assault on the rights and living conditions of working people has been carried out in a bipartisan manner. "The Democrats and Republicans represent different wings of the same ruling class," he said. "Our campaign represents an independent, working-class alternative to the two-party system."

Satter had just returned from Cuba as a participant in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. "Cuba is an example of what

working people are capable of once we get the government of the exploiters off our backs and begin to reorganize society to meet human needs rather than the profits of a tiny minority," he said. He called on Washington to end its decades-long embargo against Cuba and restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens there. A forum is planned August 11 featuring a panel of those who participated in the Youth Exchange.

Campaign supporters collected some 800 signatures the first weekend in August and are planning for a big turnout August 11-12, as part of a drive to collect twice the requirement of 2,000 signatures.

Earlier in the week a team of campaign supporters petitioned during rush hour at a subway stop in South Boston, a largely Irish immigrant part of the city. Andrea Morell, a campaign supporter, reported she met some Irish workers who had only been in the country a few weeks or months. One bought

a copy of the campaign newspaper, the *Militant*. Morell explained, "He shared the conviction of the paper's coverage that the fight for a united Ireland was unstoppable." Four *Militants* were sold by the team.

Ted Leonard works in a meatpacking plant in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

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S. African workers shut down auto plants

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

In the latest battle to flare up in South Africa's annual July-August contract negotiation period, workers shut down the country's auto industry after contract talks broke down. Some 21,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) launched a nationwide strike August 6 against BMW, Volkswagen, DaimlerChrysler, Delta, Ford, Nissan, and Toyota, bringing production to a halt.

Work was halted in the biggest auto region—the Eastern Cape province—as well as at plants near Durban and Pretoria. The shutdown will put extra pressure on several plants producing cars for export contracts. Auto manufacturing makes up a large part

of South Africa's economy, employing about 30,000 workers. The country's annual wage negotiating season peaks in July and August, when several long-term contracts expire.

"The union will not settle for an unacceptable compromise that will not give workers decent wages," said NUMSA spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli. He called the first day of the walkout, accompanied by protests, pickets and toyi-toying, "a resounding success."

Dave Kirby, a spokesman for the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organization, which represents the major auto bosses, complained that the strike would have "serious consequences for the local economy and further negatively influence

foreign perceptions about labor stability in South Africa."

NUMSA is demanding a 12 percent wage increase, and wants the current three-year contract system changed so that wages are negotiated every two years. The employers are offering a 7.5 percent wage increase.

Current inflation levels in South Africa are hovering, officially, at about 6.5 percent. Almost no industrial contracts, however, include automatic increases to compensate for spikes in prices, let alone the inflationary consequences of a currency that is steadily declining against the dollar and the euro.

A day after the auto strike began, members of two unions struck Highveld Steel and Vanadium, the country's second-largest steel manufacturer, which is majority-owned by Anglo American Corp.

About 3,000 NUMSA members and 1,100 members of Mineworkers Union-Solidarity are demanding wage increases ranging from 10 percent to 15 percent, against a company offer of 8 percent. The unions are also demanding progress on health-care subsidies, housing subsidies, overtime pay, and leaves for shop stewards to attend to union activity.

The Highveld strike follows a settlement

at Iscor, the biggest steel producer in the country, where 15,000 workers had begun a strike in the form of general meetings in plants on August 3. The company agreed to wage increases of 7 percent for the highest-paid workers, and 9 percent for the lowest paid.

Meanwhile, a planned strike by 50,000 gold miners against three companies—Gold Fields, Harmony, and Durban Roodepoort Deep, was called off after the first two agreed to increase the monthly minimum wage to 2,000 rands per month (about US\$240) and increase annual leave to 25 days. Durban Roodepoort's minimum wage will rise to R1,600 a month (US\$192) and brings leave days to 24 a year by 2003. The companies also agreed to provide some medical care for miners who have contracted HIV/AIDS, increased training for women, and longer meal breaks.

These strikes—and the gains registered when the bosses blinked as walkouts loomed—underline the fact that the working class in South Africa, the strongest contingent of the industrial proletariat south of the Sahara, has plenty of fighting capacity. That fighting spirit is scheduled to be on display once again at the end of this month.

Youth festival opens in Algeria

Continued from front page

egation marched with T-shirts and portraits of revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, "one of the highest symbols of the internationalist spirit of the [Cuban] Revolution and as an expression of the ties that bound the Heroic Guerrilla with Algeria," as the Cuban daily *Granma* put it. One of those marching was Guevara's daughter, Aleida Guevara.

The Cuban delegation includes farmers, soldiers, workers, technicians, and other youth selected for their outstanding work. According to *Granma*, Otto Rivero, head of the delegation and first secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), stated that they will describe how Cuban youth are involved today in a "battle of ideas" to "mobilize youth and strengthen their vanguard role in the battle for the best causes of humanity, at a time when capitalism is seeking to demobilize many people." The Cuban delegates include many of the leaders of the UJC and the Federation of University Students.

Among the participants in the ceremony was a U.S. delegation that carried signs reading, "U.S. Hands Off the Middle East," "Free the Five Cuban Patriots in U.S. Prisons," "U.S. Navy Out of Vieques," and "Cancel the Third World Debt."

The campaign on behalf of the imprisoned Cubans refers to an effort to win justice for five framed-up Cuban citizens who were recently tried and sentenced by a U.S. court on "espionage" charges. They had been working to expose U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary groups responsible for terrorist attacks against Cuba.

A variety of forums and workshops are now being organized on topics such as neoliberalism and globalization, solidarity with the people of Palestine, and the fight against Washington's Plan Colombia, under which the U.S. military is increasing its pres-

ence in South America.

The festival will end with a three-day anti-imperialist tribunal where delegates from Puerto Rico, Cuba, North Korea, and other countries will make presentations about struggles against imperialism and present evidence of the brutality and crimes of the U.S., French, British, and other imperialist powers.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

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The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba and the Congolese Revolution: Lessons for Today. Fri., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Farmers and the Fight for Water: Reportback from the Klamath River Basin. Fri., Aug. 24, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 3926 Mission St. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

New York City Militant Labor Forum Developing resistance in the coalfields

Speaker: Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers candidate for Pittsburgh mayor, member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248 in Pennsylvania.

**Sat., Aug. 25, 7:30 p.m.
Donation: \$4**

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Why Working People Can't Get Justice from the Capitalist Criminal Justice System.

Speaker: Ned Measel, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 17, 7:00 p.m. 465 Boulevard, Suite 214. Tel: (404) 622-8917.

NEW JERSEY

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From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Washington's Anti-Ballistic Missile Shield.

Speaker: Brian Williams, Militant staff writer. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Reportback on Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. Speaker: representative of Young Socialists, participants in exchange. Fri., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 506 Springfield Ave. 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Anniversary of the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fri., August 10, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

Crisis in the Dominican Republic. Working

People Resist Austerity and Cop Brutality. Speaker: Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Washington's Anti-Ballistic Missile Shield.

Speaker: John Hawkins. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. **British Troops Out of Ireland.** Speaker: Ruth Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 17 7:30 p.m. Both events at 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Energy Crisis is Product of Capitalism, not Nature. Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League candidate for mayor of Auckland. Fri., Aug. 17, 7:00 p.m. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Donation: \$3. Tel: (09) 276-8885.

Christchurch

Energy Crisis is Product of Capitalism, not Nature. Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League candidate for mayor of Auckland. Sat., Aug. 18, 7:00 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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Where Lumumba is playing

'Lumumba' is about the anticolonial revolution in the Congo, led by Patrice Lumumba, and how Washington and Brussels overthrew the newly independent government. Playing in many cities. To find out where go to:

http://www.zeitgeistfilm.com/current/playdates/lumumba.playdates.html

How about an age-limit law?—The Czech government is sweating over a disclosed report from Philip Morris. Earlier, the huge trust had



Harry Ring

bought the state tobacco company and enjoys 80 percent of the market. The report offered data show-

ing that the premature death of smokers saved the government up to \$30 million a year in retirement pensions, medical care, etc. A tidy sum, but it doesn't match the profit of \$82 million pocketed by Philip Morris last year, despite the loss of valued customers.

Uncle Sam's taking care of it—In 18 states, perchlorate, a chemical by-product of rocket fuel, has been detected in soil and water, and it's suspected to be present in 20 other states where rocket fuel is made. The chemical is linked to

neurological impairment in children and thyroid cancer in adults. In California, environmentalists estimate the chemical is present in 7 million water taps.

Armed for sky rage?—The Federal Aviation Administration is weighing a plan to reduce air traffic delays by permitting pilots to change their routes and take short cuts, fly closer together, land in bad weather, and talk less with controllers.

'Labor'?—A Labour Party member of the United Kingdom

parliament has suggested that immigrants seeking entry to marry be barred unless they can speak adequate English.

Impoverished 'anti-poverty' programs—The Labour Party says that in its first three-year term it tried various anti-poverty measures, but the gap between rich and poor remains as great as before.

Surely, council members expected—The city council in Redondo Beach, California, is pondering a measure that would require

people who want to address the council to first take an oath that they're telling the truth.

Like, maybe, adequate mass transit?—"When terror comes along for the ride—Thousands of Americans suffer from panic attacks and phobias related to driving. Therapists say there are ways to conquer their fears"—News headline.

Thought for the week—"We must protect the claims of nature while also protecting the legal rights of property owners."—George Bush.

Bipartisan commission attacks Social Security

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A bipartisan White House commission released a report July 19 that will be used by the administration to help justify attacks on Social Security. The commission raises the scare that the system is running out of money and backs proposals for using Social Security funds to establish individual retirement accounts. Representatives of the AFL-CIO and Black and women's organizations have opposed the commission's arguments.

Two weeks later, Congressmen James Kolbe, a Republican, and Democrat Charles Stenholm announced they are submitting legislation to substantially alter Social Security. Their proposals include a mandatory personal investment account in which up to 3 percent of earnings would be placed. The bill would reduce benefits, "especially for middle and upper-income workers," increase the level of earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax, and cut back cost-of-living adjustments. The plan would move up by a decade, to 2011, the year in which 67 would become the age at which retirees could claim full benefits.

Although the two Congressmen say their bill has little chance of passage now, the plan "largely tracks the general approach set out by Mr. Bush" when he established the commission, observed the July 29 *New York Times*.

The U.S. ruling class has been pressing for a number of years through both Democratic and Republican administrations to undercut Social Security and gut it as a guaranteed entitlement. President Bush laid out his support for private investment accounts during last year's election campaign and made support for the proposal a condition of being on the White House commission. Bush proposed transferring \$1 trillion in Social Security funds to individual accounts by 2010. His opponent, Democrat Albert Gore, also called for setting up such accounts, while saying that he would keep funding for the Social Security program at its current level.

The proposal represents the biggest direct attack on Social Security since President William Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act in 1996. That legislation eliminated the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and cut off food stamps and Medicaid to many working people. The five-year limit it placed on receiving welfare comes due at the end of the year.

The commission's findings were "intended not to make specific proposals [and] referred only obliquely to private accounts," reported the July 20 *New York Times*. Rather, it makes a case for why Social Security

"should undergo the most sweeping changes in its history."

The 16 members of the body, officially titled the "President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security," are divided equally between Democrats and Republicans. It was chaired by retired Democrat Senator Patrick Moynihan and Republican Richard Parsons, vice chairman of AOL Time Warner.

The report claims the alternative to private investment accounts will be "deep benefit cuts, tax increases or massive federal debt," reported the *Washington Post*.

The commission's report casts its findings as beneficial to Blacks and women, stating that under the current system Blacks receive fewer benefits because on average they die sooner. In an editorial, the *Investor's Business Daily* described critics of privatization as "ostriches." The paper cites Jeffrey Liebman, a professor of public policy at Harvard University, who says African-Americans "receive nearly \$21,000 less on a lifetime basis than whites with similar income and marital status."

Disability and survivors' benefits

Those going after Social Security pose the government-guaranteed entitlement solely as a retirement program, ignoring the other benefits provided under this system. Hugh Price and Julian Bond, the president of the National Urban League and chairman of the NAACP, respectively, took this up in a July 26 op-ed article in the *New York Times*. "In addition to providing retirement income," they wrote, "Social Security acts like life and disability insurance. It pays benefits in the case of disability of the contributor; or, in the case of death, it pays benefits to surviving spouses and children."

As to claims that the privatization scheme would benefit Blacks, the two wrote: "African-Americans are only 12 percent of the population, but they make up 17 percent of Americans receiving Social Security disability benefits and 22 percent of all children receiving survivor benefits." Price and Bond argued against "privatization proposals [that] would divert large amounts of money from the current system" and jeopardize those benefits.

The civil rights officials described Social Security benefits as "progressive—that is, low-income people receive a larger percentage of benefits, relative to their earnings, than higher-income individuals do." Private investment accounts increase inequality, they explain, since they would be purely income-based—even assuming a "healthy stock market" and increasing returns on investments.

The commission's report claims that women live longer than men but receive a lower total pension because of their usually lower lifetime earnings, but it ignores government figures that show women make up 82 percent of the recipients of preretirement survivors' benefits.

Social Security is the by-product of massive mobilizations by working people—especially the union and social struggles in the 1930s and the civil rights battles that, in the 1950s and '60s, battered down Jim Crow discrimination in the South and dealt blows to racism nationwide. In 1999 more than 44 million people were receiving an average annual retirement income under Social Security of \$8,600.

The drive by the big business parties to take the next big step against this social conquest is openly cast as a bipartisan one. "Washington has a dirty little secret," wrote senators John Breaux, Democrat, and Judd Gregg, Republican, in the July 26 *Washington Post*. "When it comes to reforming So-



U.S. ruling class has been pressing for a number of years through the Democratic and Republican parties to undermine Social Security and gut it as an entitlement. New White House proposals calling for mandatory investment accounts is latest attack.

cial Security, Republicans and Democrats aren't as far apart as they want you to believe.

"Everyone agrees that the current Social Security system is unsustainable," they asserted. The debate has reached "presidential proportions in both parties," they wrote,

noting that "former president Bill Clinton had seriously studied personal Social Security accounts along with other reforms when he was in office."

"Enough common ground exists between the two parties to close the ideological and philosophical gap," they concluded.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

August 27, 1976

Two months after the first massive Black uprisings erupted in South Africa, Black youths have launched a new wave of protests against the racist white minority regime.

In face of government bullets and tear gas, tens of thousands of young Black militants poured out into the streets of Soweto and other Black townships to express their hatred for the apartheid regime and to demand the release of all political prisoners.

There were students boycotts and sporadic protests throughout the period after the June rebellions. The unrest took a sharp turn upward on August 4 when about 20,000 Blacks in Soweto tried to march from that Black city to the center of nearby Johannesburg. They planned to rally outside the central police headquarters to press their demand for the release of the arrested student leaders.

The protesters carried signs reading, "Release our brothers" and, "We are born free but everywhere we are in chains."

Before they reached the police barricades that had been erected on the outskirts of Soweto, however, the demonstrators were fired on by the police.

In the days that followed, the enraged residents of Soweto again attacked symbols of white authority as they had in June. But unlike the June rebellions, which were spontaneous explosions of pent-up anger and frustration, the new protests in Soweto displayed signs of rudimentary organization.

The attempted marches to Johannesburg followed mass meetings of students, where the actions were discussed and planned. Students set up coordinated pickets and barricades on the edges of Soweto in order to urge Black workers to stay away from their jobs as a sign of protest.

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August 20, 1951

While Truman bemoans and tries to blame his Republican opponents, in particular McCarthy, for the spreading reign of terror in America, more repressions are being prepared in Congress to extend the witch-hunt deeper and deeper.

Senator McCarran (Dem.) has introduced a bill, which, if passed, will spread the purge into every shop in the country. This bill, which is a logical conclusion to the loyalty purge which Truman launched, will give unlimited powers to the corporations to fire any militant they choose.

McCarran proposes to empower employers to fire "without liability" workers whose names appear on any Federal or state list of "subversives," or who are charged with belonging to such groups.

In addition to this the Senator proposes other open union-busting amendments to his notorious McCarran Act.

These will make it unlawful for any member of a communist or "front" group to hold office in a union. Furthermore, it decertifies as bargaining agent any union having an officer who is either a member of a Communist or a "front" group.

Still another deadly weapon placed in the hands of the employers is the authorization to fire any worker who refuses to tell "a duly constituted legislative committee" whether he belongs or has belonged to any organization on the Attorney General's subversive list.

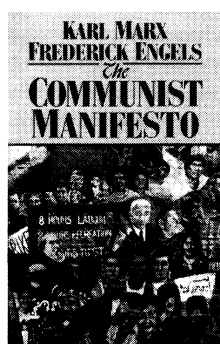
Something new has also been added to the drive to destroy freedom of the press in America. The justice department in its indictment of the West Coast Communists, recently arrested, has included in the list of so-called crimes the writing of articles for the Communist press.

from Pathfinder

The Communist Manifesto

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communism is derived not from preconceived principles but from facts and proletarian movements springing from the actual class struggle. \$3.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Israeli rulers beat the war drums

Working people around the world should support the demand by the Palestinians for the immediate withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such a step would remove the source of the daily violence, and is more urgent now than ever as the drums of war begin to beat more loudly in Israel and the United States.

A number of commentators and politicians in these two countries are preparing public opinion for an all-out offensive by the Israeli military—an option that is openly discussed among Israeli political leaders today. They are stepping up their slanders against the Palestinians, aiming to deaden the response of working people elsewhere to the use of Israel's military might against the Palestinians' just struggle for self-determination.

These warmongers point to the many wars with Palestinians and with other countries in the region that have been fought to establish and maintain the Zionist state. Those wars included the 1967 surprise attack by the Israeli military, which seized the West Bank and Gaza Strip, along with other territories, from neighboring countries. The Palestinians living in those areas were supposed to become a source of docile, cheap labor. The areas granted to them for self-rule after years of struggle—scattered, disconnected, and vulnerable to military attack—were intended as a sop that would end their mobilizations and their resistance. That they did not submit, but continued to fight for their national rights, is their real crime in the

eyes of the Israeli rulers and their backers.

The state of Israel is a death trap for the great majority of Jewish people who live there. The present and future perspectives of those who counsel war illustrate that fact. This state serves only the interests of the tiny minority of superwealthy capitalists who are its ruling class, and the ruling classes in other imperialist countries. By contrast, it offers working people who are Jewish only more insecurity, constant conflict with the Palestinians, and frequent wars with other countries in the region.

The perspective of a secular and democratic state in the region—a slogan put forward by the Palestine Liberation Organization in the period of its rise—points the way forward for Palestinians, Jews, and all working people of the region. Around such a slogan, they can unite against their common exploiters and class enemies: the Israeli rulers and their imperialist allies.

The immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces would be an elementary step towards ending the bloodshed, and a prerequisite for the formation of a contiguous and independent Palestinian territory—itsself a necessary step in the struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine. Such moves would get the jackboot of the Israeli police and armed forces off the Palestinians' necks, and give them space and time to discuss their situation, to win new allies, including among the Israeli people, and to organize the next steps in their fight.

The resegregation of education

The facts brought to light by a recent Harvard study starkly point out a reality already known to millions of working people, especially African-Americans, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities: schools in the United States are becoming more segregated. This truth flies in the face of arguments put forward by opponents of affirmative action and school desegregation that America has become color-blind, or that so much social progress has been made that busing, affirmative action measures, bilingual education, and other such steps are no longer necessary.

Capitalism will never provide equal education or opportunities for Blacks, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities, nor a real system of education for all working people. Inequality and oppression are among the foundation stones of the social relations under capitalism, including discrimination in housing, jobs, the court system, and every other aspect of this society. As with Social Security and other measures won as part of the struggles of workers and farmers, the two-party system and capitalist social relations themselves work incessantly to erode, undermine, and reverse the conquests of working people.

The education system under capitalism serves to reinforce the exploitation of the majority by the few. Despite the best intentions of many teachers, schools are institutions of social control that inculcate the dog-eat-dog social values of capitalist competition—the struggle of each against all. Human solidarity is undermined, and students are taught to accept the norms of bourgeois society based

on class differentiation.

The erosion of school desegregation plans, including the dismantling of school busing programs across the country, goes hand in hand with the assault by the capitalist rulers on affirmative action. They have dealt serious blows to affirmative action across the country, from California's Proposition 209 banning affirmative action in college admissions and hiring, to the Appeals Court ruling in Texas that also struck down affirmative action in university admissions.

The defeat in the 1960s of the Jim Crow system of legalized segregation in the South opened the road for better education and job opportunities for Blacks and other oppressed people. The mass working-class movement that swept across the southern United States instilled confidence in and strengthened the entire working class. It's no coincidence that the greatest advances in school desegregation were won in the South, which was ground zero in the battle against legalized segregation. That remains the situation today.

The fight for school desegregation is intertwined with the fight for affirmative action, bilingual education, immigrant rights, and other social questions that confront working people. It is through these battles that workers and farmers throw off the self-image and the divisions the capitalist rulers impose on us. Through our collective experience in struggles we can build solidarity and gain confidence that we are capable of taking power away from the exploiters and reorganizing society in our own interests.

Aid now to Central America!

The drought and famine in Central America today is a catastrophe that urgently calls for solidarity from workers and farmers worldwide.

The response of the U.S. rulers has been criminally callous. The big-business media has virtually blacked out this situation, which threatens the lives and health of hundreds of thousands of working people in Nicaragua and Honduras in particular. Washington, the wealthiest government in the world, has offered a bare pittance of aid, releasing \$6 million in bags of food that will last for only a short period and will not cover even half of the affected population.

The U.S. government should immediately send massive aid—with no strings attached—in food, clothing, medicine, transportation, and health-care personnel.

The drought and famine is not primarily an inevitable "accident of nature." These conditions—millions threatened with hunger, disease, unemployment, and lack of housing, medical care, and other basic needs—are man-made. It is a social disaster, one in which the culprit is not the workers and farmers affected by the crisis, as the defenders of the status quo would have us believe, but imperialist domination and capitalist rule.

The consequences of the drought are the result of underdevelopment created by more than a century of plunder by Washington and other imperialist powers. Imperialist domination deforms the economies of Central American nations. Agricultural production is geared for exports profiting the U.S. and other imperialist monopolies, at the expense of food self-sufficiency. Unequal terms of trade have a devastating impact on the prices that Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and other nations in the region receive for their goods, while paying higher

prices to import machinery and manufactured goods from the most industrialized countries. The exploiters are concerned only about their profits, not spending money on good roads, communications, health care, decent housing, and other basic needs.

Peasants, denied easy access to equipment, seed, and credit, are being driven off the land by capitalist landowners. Coffee workers and other rural toilers are plagued by seasonal work that leaves them jobless for much of the year. These workers are justly demanding jobs and economic protection.

Meanwhile, working people in Central America are forced to pay tribute to the imperialist bankers and creditors in Washington and elsewhere through the ever-mounting foreign debt. The U.S. rulers' only solution is more loans—more debt slavery.

Working people in the United States should demand the immediate and unconditional canceling of the foreign debt of all Central American nations. This demand is part of the perspective of an *international* fight by working people for jobs, land, and a decent livelihood.

In contrast to Washington's brutal indifference, revolutionary Cuba, with less resources, has been sending volunteer doctors and health-care workers to the most remote areas of several Central American nations, and training hundreds of youth from those countries at the Latin American School of Medicine free of charge. Cuba offers an example of international working-class solidarity, and shows what is possible when working people make a revolution and take power into their hands.

Immediate, massive relief aid to Central America!
Cancel the debt of Central America and the Third World!

'Working-class road to peace'

Continued from Page 10

Treasury official Craig Roberts on U.S.-Russian relations and sharpening conflicts with the EU. He wrote, "Roberts believes that in the post-Cold War period, the European Union will not be a U.S. friend—and may well be the enemy. He cites the EU's bureaucratic superstate of over-regulation, the Euro-whining anti-American rudeness toward President Bush, and the protectionist anti-trust shielding of Euro businesses from the marketplace rigors of the best U.S. companies. In other words the Eurocrats are on the wrong side of history. Dr. Roberts concludes that the U.S. should forge a new alliance with Russia based on mutual economic and political goals."

To help gain a longer-term class perspective on these questions, Sandler urged forum participants to read two speeches presented by Leon Trotsky in the mid-1920s that are contained in the Pathfinder pamphlet *Europe and America*. In these talks, Trotsky points to the "giant world shift of economic forces" coming out of World War I that led to the rising power of U.S. capital over and in Europe.

Workers must be partisans of science

Sandler also commented on the controversy over genetically modified crops, which is among the major conflicts between the U.S. and French governments. There is opposition by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces on both sides of the Atlantic to these crops being produced and sold in Europe and elsewhere, despite the fact that there is not a shred of evidence that genetically modified organisms harm humans or the soil, said Sandler.

"It's important for working people to be partisans of science," he stated. "We know that the capitalist rulers take scientific developments that can benefit society—such as raising crop yields—and they use it to further destroy the soil and line their pockets with profits. But scientific knowledge can be harnessed by humanity to advance the cause of the toilers. What's needed is to chart a working-class road to power," he said.

As the world capitalist economic crisis deepens, and the employers and their government press forward their assault on working people, socialist workers are finding a greater interest in a working-class explanation of all political and social questions, he said. More workers and farmers want to read serious books by communist leaders on the history of the working-class movement, questions such as the need to build a worker-farmer alliance, and a Marxist analysis of current developments in world politics. There are greater opportunities to reach out to workers in struggle—not only in the United States but internationally as well, he said.

Sandler pointed to the recent rally of some 400 coal miners and their supporters in Powhatan Point, Ohio, against the bosses' drive against the miners union, safety on the job, and working conditions. "This struggle is just one example among many today of the working-class road to peace and a livable environment," Sandler said.

From Pathfinder

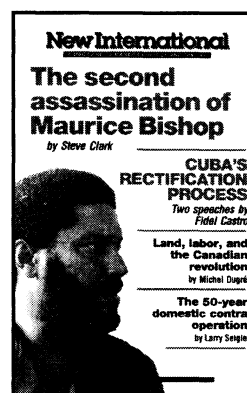
Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation

by Larry Seigle

in New International no. 6

Also includes

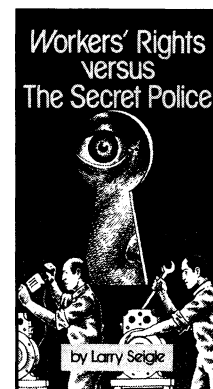
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50 años de guerra encubierta

Spanish-language pamphlet includes "Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation." \$6.95

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What is a ‘degenerated workers state?’

Below are excerpts from *In Defense of Marxism: The Social and Political Contradictions of the Soviet Union on the Eve of World War II* by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August (see special offer below). The following selection is taken from the January 1940 article, "From a scratch to the danger of gangrene," written as part of a debate in the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. It is copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Footnote is by the *Militant*.

BY LEON TROTSKY

What does "degenerated workers state" signify in our program? To this question our program responds with a degree of concreteness which is wholly adequate for solving the question of the defense of the USSR; namely: (1) those traits which in 1920 were a "bureaucratic deformation" of the soviet system have now become an independent

through their trade unions (which have undergone the selfsame degeneration as the state) is today in contrast to 1920 completely unrealistic; it is necessary to overthrow the bureaucracy; this task can be carried out only by creating an illegal bolshevik party in the USSR.

From the circumstance that the degeneration of the political system has not yet led to the destruction of planned state economy, we draw the conclusion that it is still the duty of the world proletariat to defend the USSR against imperialism and to aid the Soviet proletariat in its struggle against the bureaucracy....

In its present foreign as well as domestic policy, the bureaucracy places first and foremost for defense its own parasitic interests. To that extent we wage mortal struggle against it, but in the final analysis, through the interests of the bureaucracy, in a very distorted form the interests of the workers state are reflected. These interests we defend—with our own methods. Thus we do not at all wage a struggle against the fact that the bureaucracy safeguards (in its own way!) state property, the monopoly of foreign trade, or refuses to pay tsarist debts. Yet in a war between the USSR and the capitalist world—independently of the incidents leading up to that war or the "aims" of this or that government—what is involved is the fate of precisely those historical conquests which we defend unconditionally, i.e., despite the reactionary policy of the bureaucracy. The question consequently boils down—in the last and decisive instance—to the class nature of the USSR....

Class definitions

Let us return once more to the ABC's. In Marxist sociology the initial point of analysis is the *class* definition of a given phenomenon, e.g., state, party, philosophic trend, literary school, etc. In most cases, however, the mere class definition is inadequate, for a class consists of different strata, passes through different stages of development, comes under different conditions, is subjected to the influence of other classes. It becomes necessary to bring up these second- and third-rate factors in order to round out the analysis, and they are taken either partially or completely, depending upon the specific aim. But for a Marxist, analysis is



Red Army soldiers during World War II. "The defeat of the USSR in a war with imperialism would signify not solely the liquidation of the bureaucratic dictatorship, but of the planned state economy," argues Trotsky in the document.

impossible without a class characterization of the phenomenon under consideration....

Imperialist war is one of the functions of finance capital, i.e., the bourgeoisie at a certain stage of development resting upon capitalism of a specific structure, namely, monopoly capital. This definition is sufficiently concrete for our basic political conclusions. But by extending the term *imperialist* war to cover the Soviet state too, Shachtman¹ cuts the ground away from under his own feet. In order to reach even a superficial justification for applying one and the same designation to the expansion of finance capital and the expansion of the workers state, Shachtman is compelled to detach himself from the social structure of both states altogether by proclaiming it to be—an abstraction. Thus playing hide and seek with Marxism, Shachtman labels the concrete as abstract and palms off the abstract as concrete!

This outrageous toying with theory is not accidental. Every petty bourgeois in the United States without exception is ready to call every seizure of territory "imperialist," especially today when the United States does not happen to be occupied with acquiring territories. But if this very same petty

bourgeois is told that the entire foreign policy of finance capital is imperialist regardless of whether it be occupied at the given moment in carrying out an annexation or in "defending" Finland against annexation—then our petty bourgeois jumps back in pious indignation.

Naturally the leaders of the opposition differ considerably from an average petty bourgeois in their aim and in their political level. But alas they have common roots of thought. A petty bourgeois invariably seeks to tear political events away from their social foundation, since there is an organic conflict between a class approach to facts and the social position and education of the petty bourgeoisie.

¹ Max Shachtman, a founder of the American Left Opposition and of the Socialist Workers Party. Succumbing to petty-bourgeois pressure when World War II began, he led a struggle to revise basic Marxist policies and practices, including opposing unconditional defense of the Soviet Union in a war with a capitalist power. He split from the SWP to form the Workers Party and was at his death a leader of the right wing of the Socialist Party.

LETTERS

Colons and pieds noirs

I think it is not correct to use the term *colons* and *pieds noirs* synonymously, as is done in the second paragraph of an excerpt from an article from *Workers and Farmers Governments Since the Second World War* by Robert Chester in the May 28 issue.

After its military victory in 1830, the colonization of Algeria by the French colonial empire consisted of despoilment and expropriation of buildings and the best lands. In 1942 there were 830,000 French or European people living in Algeria. Most were private workers, state workers, or in the middle class. The generic name for them was *pieds noirs*.

The French settlers in rural areas, most of whom owned between 100 and 15,000 hectares of land, numbered 26,153 in 1930. These *colons*, also from Europe, were like little latifundists. *Colons* often fled earlier than the victory of independence in 1962 to reinvest their capital. The *pieds noirs*, who fled massively to France in 1962, never considered themselves as *colons*, even if, in their great majority, they were also against the Algerian revolution.

Bleton Claude
Soisy, France

Clerical workers' fight

Some 200 clerical workers at the University of Minnesota who are represented by AFSCME Local 3800 picketed outside office buildings on the university's three Twin Cities campuses July 25. The informational picket line was organized to protest the university administration's attempt to force us into a new health-care plan that will require big premium increases and co-pays. Currently university employees are covered by the same plan as State of Minnesota employees—a plan that is negotiated by AFSCME. The university is imposing the new plan on its nonunion employees, but the unionized

workforce is resisting the switch.

Little progress has been made in negotiating a new contract for the local since the administration has refused to discuss wages or language improvements until the union agrees to the new health plan. The old contract expired in June. Members of the Teamsters local on campus joined the lines, as did members of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees union, construction workers, and nonunion university staff. The 40 or so workers that I picketed with in the Medical area of the campus where I work were very energized by the action and many expressed the desire to do it again.

Sandi Sherman
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Food workers' victory

After eight days, the strikers at Bluebird Foods plants in New Zealand went back to work, having won an increased pay offer from the company. Their wages will increase by 4.25 percent this year and 3.6 percent the following year.

At the Auckland factory, workers maintained a 24-hour picket line during the strike. No production took place and no products left the warehouse. Several meetings were held to decide whether to stay out, with some 90 percent voting each time to remain on strike. Contrasting the company's use of "team methods" with the unity on the picket line, one worker joked, "We call the strike the best team-building exercise we've had."

Janet Roth
Auckland, New Zealand

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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Guard killed at Australia abortion clinic

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia—A gunman entered the waiting room of the Fertility Control Clinic, Australia's first legal abortion facility, in Melbourne July 16 and shot and killed Steve Rogers, the security guard, after a brief scuffle near the reception desk. The attack took place only minutes after the daily protest by the antiabortion group, Helpers of God's Precious Innocents, had disbanded.

Two men who were waiting for patients tackled and disarmed the gunman as clinic staff called the police. In custody, charged with murder, the gunman has to date refused to identify himself.

Founded by the late doctor Bertram Wainer in 1972, the Fertility Control Clinic has been targeted by antiabortion protesters for decades.

Jo Wainer, who helped her husband set up the clinic, explained in an interview with Melbourne's daily newspaper *The Age*, "There were times in the 1970s and the early '80s when there were hundreds surrounding the building. I remember my husband walking over the top of them (he was a big man) to get a woman who was trying to get inside. Angry mobs used to surround the cars of women arriving at the clinic. They would rock the cars and scream that the women were murderers."

Soon after the murder, Right To Life president Margaret Tighe said, "Given the nature of what occurs in these places, it is a wonder there have not been any more of these incidents." She added that "unborn children are being killed there. When you know that, it is not surprising that somebody

might want to take the law into their own hands."

Ben O'Brien from Helpers of God's Precious Innocents said, "We are shocked and sad. We knew Steve reasonably well; he was a nice bloke and we did not wish him any ill. But we believe that violence begets violence. It's hardly surprising that abortion leads to acts of violence."

An editorial appearing on July 19 in the *Australian* began by saying, "There is no place in Australia for US-style violence directed at those who enter abortion clinics." Pointing the finger at the United States as the source of violence has become a media refrain as well as a discussion amongst defenders of abortion rights in Australia. The same editorial concluded, "Tolerant Australia

do not identify with the extremism of people at polar ends of this complex controversy, and would prefer reasoned debate about a vexing public and social question." The big business daily claimed that both supporters of access to legal, safe abortion and the antiabortion protesters share equal blame.

Natasha Stott-Despoya, leader of the Australian Democrats, is calling for laws banning antiabortion protests within a designated perimeter around clinics. This is being supported by other activists, such as Children by Choice in Brisbane who are lobbying for similar legislation.

Margaret Kirby, center manager of the Bessie Smythe Foundation—Australia's first feminist abortion service—and an ac-

tivist in the Women's Abortion Action Campaign (WAAC) in Sydney, explained, "WAAC opposes such legislation. If the government begins banning antiabortion protests, what's next? Will trade union actions be banned? Or demonstrations outside refugee detention centers?"

A small abortion rights protest took place on the steps of Victoria's State Parliament in the days immediately after the murder. WAAC in Sydney is organizing a public meeting on August 29 to defend abortion rights, condemn the murder and discuss the way forward.

Joanne Kuniansky is a member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union and of WAAC.

Plant explosion kills worker in Iceland

BY SNORRI ARASON
AND HANNA MIKAELSDÓTTIR

HAFNARFJORDUR, Iceland—An explosion at the ISAL aluminum plant south of here June 22 killed one worker and severely injured another. Vilhjálmur Kristjánsson, 41, was burned over 80 percent of his body. He died several days later. Daníel Kristinsson, 21, is burned over 35 percent of his body and is still hospitalized.

Both were employed by Kerfóðrun, a company set up by ISAL in order to contract out some work at the plant. Kristjánsson had been working at the plant for 14 months. Kristinsson is a replacement

worker during the summer months.

The explosion occurred when the two were working on a pod scheduled to be restarted on full power later in the day. The pod had electricity running through the electrodes in order to heat it up. The workers were loosening iron clings, which connect the electrodes to a bridge, without noticing or without knowing that they should not loosen the clings before the electrodes had been locked to their usual fittings. When they had almost finished the job the voltage reached such a high level that an electrical explosion, similar to lightning, occurred.

At a meeting with ISAL security representative Halldór Halldórsson and the manager of the pod house, workers asked why the men who were injured were not familiar with the dangers of the work situation. Halldórsson said it was not clear what had happened and noted that the workers involved were employed by Kerfóðrun, implying that ISAL was not responsible for training them. One worker asked if it was true that Kristjánsson had asked to be allowed to leave early that day. Halldórsson answered that it would be hard for his family to hear stories like that.

In an article in the daily *Fréttabladid*, Halldórsson brushed off the workers' death and injury, saying accidents at work always can occur, just as someone could fall off a chair because they are sitting on it in the wrong way.

At the entrance to the plant the bosses maintain a billboard claiming to show how many days have passed since a lost-time injury. Workers at the plant know that there are many accidents that do not get registered on the billboard. After the explosion, the company did not zero out the days on the billboard, stating that the workers involved were employed by another company.

This stance was opposed by many workers, who pressured the company to put the billboard at zero when Kristjánsson died. At the same time the bosses said the company would not start registering accidents of workers employed by Kerfóðrun and that the change in the billboard was out of respect for workers at Kerfóðrun.

After the funeral the company started counting the days without a lost-time injury again. A few days later, however, the bosses decided to stop using the billboard altogether.

Brooklyn marchers demand prosecution of cop after traffic accident kills family



Some 1,000 protesters marched to police station in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, August 6.

BY RÓGER CALERO

BROOKLYN, New York—Some 1,000 people demonstrated here in the workers district of Sunset Park August 6 to demand the prosecution of an off-duty cop charged with driving drunk and killing a family with his minivan.

The crowd was outraged that the cop, Joseph Gray, had been released without bail after being charged with driving while intoxicated, second-degree manslaughter, second-degree vehicular manslaughter, reckless driving, and reckless endangerment.

Gray, who refused to take a breathalyzer alcohol test after he was arrested, registered a 0.16 percent alcohol blood level in a court-ordered test about three-and-a-half hours after the crash.

According to the local media, a witness said the off-duty cop struck Maria Herrera, 24, who was pregnant; her younger sister Dilcia Peña, 16; and Herrera's son, Andy, 4. The family was crossing the street during a "walk" signal.

"We demand justice! We demand prison for a drunken police officer who ran over and killed four people!" said a leaflet circulated by the family and friends to neighbors and others inviting them to the vigil and protest.

Participants in the demonstration gathered for a candlelight vigil at the site of the crash. They marched to the police department's 72nd Precinct where Gray is assigned. "We are angry!" and "A whole family gets killed and he still gets to be free, because he's a cop!" were comments by several people during the protest.

Many joined as the march proceeded down the street. "We didn't think that this many people would come out," said Arianny De Jesus, a friend of the family. "We just got on the phone, called people, and passed out the fliers," she said at the vigil.

The night before a group of people gathered to demand justice and show support for the family. "If they think the family is going to let this go, they got another thing coming," said Rosa Peña, the victim's cousin.

New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, while expressing his disappointment with the judge's decision not to impose a high bail, has defended the way the cops have handled the case.

Family members and supporters will come together again for the funeral and for another protest August 10 when Gray is due in court.

Bakery workers in Toronto reject 'final' offer, vote to continue strike

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Striking Christie Brown & Company bakery workers rejected the company's "final" offer at a union meeting July 27. After hearing a proposal from the negotiating committee, 189 voted against and 156 voted for the offer. Some 500 workers walked out June 24 determined to prevent the company from gutting the plant-wide seniority system and demanding to be treated with dignity on the job. The workers are members of Local 426 of the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers Union.

"The company expected a big majority 'yes' vote," local president James Vacheff told the *Militant*. "They were preparing to meet with us to work out a back-to-work protocol."

Vacheff was on a spirited picket line two days after the contract rejection. Pickets said that the company had offered a slightly higher wage increase to divide the workers, but had extended the contract from three to four years. "I'm proud of the members," said Vacheff, who is a 17-year employee and relief machine person. "They are sticking together, though some are hurting."

Vacheff reported that unions like the Canadian Auto Workers and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union had donated money to the strike. Solidarity has also come from striking Petrocan refinery workers in the area, as well as the machinists in the bakery itself.

"We don't cross their picket line," said Saro Tahirovic, a member of the machinists union at Christies. "We meet each week and decide what to do," he said. There are about 70 of us. We always vote not to cross the picket

line." He reported they are receiving financial support from their union because they won't cross the line and cannot get Employment Insurance from the government.

Contract negotiations are under way in the United States between the union and the Nabisco chain which owns Christies. In Montreal, Christie workers, who before their summer two-week shutdown refused to do overtime in solidarity, will also be in contract negotiations with the company.

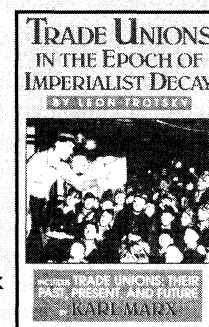
John Steele is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

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